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The Soviet Revolution

1917–1967

A Balance Sheet

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REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION

Adam B. Ulam

FOR the historian, heaven is filled with facts while purgatory is reserved for reflections.[1] Certainly when it comes to the French or the Russian Revolution, few historians have resisted the temptation of becoming philosophers of history and appending their own views to the chronicle of events. All of which is perfectly understandable and even necessary. But by the same token the historian as an eye-witness about to launch into a discussion of historical significance of the major happenings of the revolution, often loses feeling for detail. We find ourselves in the presence of vast historical canvases which, as we approach closer for a look at separate figures and incidents, become no more than blobs of colours.

This is perhaps not entirely true of the Russian Revolution. Such important participants—Trotsky, Chernov, Tseretelli, Shlyapnikov—left histories and memoirs which for all the built-in biases and historical concepts are full of vivid details. Sukhanov's chronicle is a mine of colourful incident. Many of the lesser figures were if not historians then born raconteurs, and until the late twenties the pages of *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia* bore witness to the agitation, heroism, and naiveté of the dramatic days of 1917. Still, there are great gaps in our knowledge. As for the defeated, whether the Tsarist regime, the Provisional Government, the Kadets, the SRs, the Mensheviks, etc., defeat of a cause or a party is seldom productive of dispassionate history among its partisans. And for Soviet historiography, the disadvantages under which it has worked since the late twenties are too well known to require repetition. The western historian in turn is very heavily dependent on the Russian sources for his materials. How little, to mention one important issue, do we know about the finances of the Bolshevik party during the crucial days. It is only recently that we became entitled to consider the story of German subsidies to the Bolsheviks as being correct and not a fabrication of their enemies.[2] But the details of those dealings, and their significance in enabling the Bolsheviks to recover from their rout in July, still escape us. Likewise there is a whole host of interesting and important problems which calls for clarification and for more facts.

Our first reflection then must be one of envy of the more fortunate historian of the future who will know much more than we do, for

[1] What then is in hell? Pseudo-history, e.g. histories of the Civil War with no mention of Trotsky. Or those conceptual models, recently so popular among American social scientists.

[2] The most succinct data on the subject are in Z. A. B. Zeman, *Germany and the Revolution in Russia*, Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry (London, 1958).

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undoubtedly these data and memoirs are still in the locked archives in the USSR, and these will not come to light for many years. That they are there we can be sure. Ivan Maisky in his memoirs, which attracted the official displeasure at the twenty-third CPSU congress because of their currently excessive anti-Stalin tone, mentions having read Alexandra Kollontay's memoirs, which as of now have not been cleared for publication.[3]

Alas, Mr Maisky exaggerates. We have only a sprinkling of memoirs, not a mountain, and by now we can hardly expect much more. We must therefore hope that the day will come when Moscow will open its archives, and that what emerges will not be as carefully tailored to the current political fashion in the USSR as was Mr Maisky's own contribution.[4]

Our next reflection, then, must be a question as to whether we are capable of reconstructing the events of 1917 and of their causes. Even if we had much more in the way of memoirs and materials, are not those events still too much a part of the current political process for us to deliver judgment? The trouble with the communists' use of history, at least of their own, is not the usual and banal one in the case of an ideological system, that is, simple distortions or, if one prefers, a strong and one-sided viewpoint. It is, on the contrary, lack of such a viewpoint, or to put it paradoxically, the instability of historical facts. Events and personalities are constantly shuffled around, adjusted to the current needs of internal and foreign politics. The personality and activity of Lenin may seem to provide one fixed point, but even those at times are not firmly anchored and appear to be carried along by the historical flux. That 'Lenin is still alive' is only too uncomfortably true from the poor historian's point of view. Some years after he was biologically dead he urged the continuation of the NEP through the pen of Bukharin, but was immediately enlisted as an advocate of Stalin's 'big leap forward'—collectivisation. Not long ago he appeared to Mme Lazurkina to tell her how uncomfortable it was for him to share the Mausoleum with Stalin, information which she subsequently imparted to the twenty-second congress and which was immediately acted upon. And Lenin's recent interventions on behalf of peaceful coexistence and polycentrism are still fresh in our memory.

[3] Maisky himself is less than accurate, to put it delicately, in recording various incidents of his tenure as the Soviet ambassador in London. But his point is both pathetic and disingenuous: 'One of the consequences of the cult of personality of Stalin is the great shortage of memoirs by Soviet politicians, diplomats, and leaders of the party, the state, and the army. And without a sufficient amount of such materials, the historians of the future will find it difficult to understand the events connected with the birth and development of the USSR—all the more because the capitalist world will leave for their use a whole mountain of recollections of all sorts, more or less anti-Soviet in spirit.' I. Maisky, *Vospominaniya Sovetskovo Posla*, vol. I (Moscow, 1964), p. 8.

[4] To be sure, his was strongly anti-Stalin in the Khrushchev fashion; by the time the work appeared Khrushchev was on the way out, and a more gentle way of referring to Stalin was in order.

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This lack of a stable focus in Soviet historiography has often been ascribed to the vagaries of the party line and the baneful legacy of Stalinism. But it is legitimate to ask whether this instability of history is not more basic, whether in fact it is not an inevitable product of the Revolution itself?

MARXISM was the product of a philosophy of history. Once its earlier anarcho-revolutionary encrustations fell off, the Marxist parties on the Continent subjugated their revolutionary temperament to its deterministic and scientific doctrines. A socialist leader did not have to be a revolutionary so much as a social scientist, aware of the lessons of history, sensitive as to whether the moment was ripe for this or that part of the party programme. This was as true of *soi disant* orthodox Marxists as it was of the Revisionists. Rosa Luxemburg differed sharply from Eduard Bernstein as to what the history of the preceding fifty years taught, but there was no doubt in her mind any more than in his that a lesson and a mandate were to be found there. That a revolution could be an act of will, a response to oppression or to a favourable opportunity, rather than ordained by a fairly specific set of economic and social circumstances, would at that time have been almost unimaginable to the most revolutionary Marxist.

It is this rejection of the voluntaristic conception of revolution which is at the source of Russian Marxism. It began with an emphatic rejection of the futile heroics of the People's Will. It fought resolutely against terrorism. Lenin, brother of a convicted terrorist, was to write, when the Socialist-Revolutionaries reverted to the tradition of the People's Will: 'The utter uselessness of terror is clearly shown by the experience of the Russian revolutionary movement.' Along with terror, Russian Marxism had to reject notions of the revolution in the style of a *coup d'état* à la Tkachev, though until 1917 such notions appeared so absurd that they needed little counter-argument. We look at Bolshevism naturally through the prism of 1917. But until that time there was not a great deal to indicate that it did not belong within the main current of European social-democracy. There was, of course, the personality of its leader, and the recourse to expropriations after 1905. But every departure from the then prevailing norm of socialist behaviour was always rationalised even by Lenin, by reference to the peculiar conditions of Tsarist Russia. He criticised his western colleagues, as did the Mensheviks, for their compromises with the bourgeois world, but it would not have occurred to him to demand, say, of the German Social-Democratic Party that it adopt the conspiratorial measures required by the situation in Russia. Until 1905–06, the view of the Tsar's police that the social-democrats of all hues were in the main a bookish sect and but a distant threat to the regime, was amply justified. After the first Russian Revolution, both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were regarded differently, but even then, and until the fateful year, the police treated the socialist-revolutionaries as the main danger, while the reactionaries,

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from their point of view quite logically, concentrated their fire on the Kadets.

The same impression is conveyed by the pre-1914 congresses of the Russian Social-Democratic Party with their interminable discussions about programmes both minimum and maximum. One can well picture the indignation of Tkachev, or Zaichnevsky . . . or of Lenin *in the fall of 1917*, at those pedantic deliberations, the weighing of 'ifs' and 'buts', the various contingencies sketched so learnedly by Engels and Kautsky. But the congress participants believed firmly that revolutions are made largely by programmes. Once the bourgeois-democratic revolution takes place, all the dynamite in the world will not take the place of a sound socialist platform on the peasant-agrarian issue, elaborated in accordance with the lessons of history and the *dicta* of Marxian science. To argue otherwise would have aroused not so much indignation as amusement. By the same token, the important political questions of who will actually rule, what will be the relation of socialist Russia to other states, received hardly any attention at all, for they had all been provided for in the doctrine. The bourgeoisie will rule, and then be replaced by the proletariat. Foreign relations would hardly be a taxing problem when the most important European states were all socialist.

We can see now that the language of dialectical materialism and of parliamentarism sounded strained on the lips of people who longed for a violent revolution. But they probably explained their passion even to themselves by the sad realities of Russian life.

When the war came Lenin was but one of the socialists who found themselves chafing under the democratic and gradualist tradition of post–1870 Marxism. It is sufficient to mention in this connection names like Mussolini and Pilsudski. We shall probably never know whether Lenin's dislike of Marx's and Engels's last phase was not accompanied by some more basic doubts about the whole system. Anyway, he for once criticised the two founders, and his insistence in the midst of events of transcending importance that *this* was the moment to change the name of the party to 'Communist' had something very strange about it.[5] Certainly Lenin was aware that Marx and Engels chose the original name primarily not because 'communist' sounded more militant than 'socialist', but because they sought to avoid confusion with other sects of that name, and that once the posibility of confusion was removed, 'socialist' was the only logical appellation.

The insistence on the new name was not only symbolical. It certainly freed Lenin and later his followers from much of the ideological ballast of classical Marxism. It would be silly to argue that, had it not been for the change contemplated as early as 1914 (though made only in 1918),

[5] As was his repeated and this time successful plea in the same sense at the seventh party congress in March 1918, when the Soviet regime both internally and externally hung by a hair and it seemed sheer lunacy even to spend time discussing such an academic question.

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the 'Great October Revolution' would not have taken place, nor the dictatorial and ultimately totalitarian state followed. But certainly the change in name and the freewheeling tactics of 1917 and 1918 were of one piece. Practically on his deathbed, Lenin was to quote approvingly Napoleon's device: '*On s'engage, et puis . . . on voit.*' And he referred caustically to Sukhanov's repetition of orthodox socialism's constant reproach to the Bolsheviks: 'Russia has not reached the level of development of the productive forces which would make socialism possible.'[6] Yet while upbraiding the Menshevik pedants he could not deny the correctness of the formula. He quoted Marx's dictum of 1856 that revolutions required the utmost political flexibility. He may have reflected that Napoleon's formula led him eventually to St. Helena, and that his adaptation of it to Russia was already in 1923 delivering communism into the hands of Stalin and his like. Lenin's brief piece on Sukhanov thus exhibits two sentiments, derision of his defeated enemies who at every decisive step had been handicapped by their ideological doubts and scruples; and the obvious uneasiness of the sick man lest the slighted Marxian gods of history take their revenge for 1917. And to be sure, Lenin and his legacy have been treated by his successors from Stalin to Mao with a freedom even surpassing that with which he used the lessons of Marx and Engels. How ironic his prophecy sounds today: 'Our European middle-class philistines don't even dream that the future revolution in the countries of the East . . . will bear an even more singular character than the Russian one.' And with this taunt to the spirit of Karl Marx, the maker of the Russian Revolution concluded his literary activity, except for a subsequent article attacking Stalin.

Lenin was able to emancipate the precepts of classical Marxism because the Great War made the whole pre–1914 world of liberal and socialist concepts appear unreal and irrelevant. It is a measure of how far we ourselves have departed from that world that the scruples and hesitations of the Bolsheviks' socialist opponents in 1917 appear ridiculous if not indeed sheer imbecility. Yet being good Marxists, people like Martov and even Tseretelli thought mainly in terms of historical precedents and laws. It seems incredible that a man as intelligent as Martov, who had discerned and fought Lenin's dictatorial tendencies long before 1914, would in 1917 consistently oppose any measure of repression against Bolshevism. But this contradiction is easily explicable. Before 1914 the Russian revolutionary movement was in the main a conspiracy, and as such always in danger of being captured by a ruthless minority. But in 1917 Russia became a democracy, 'the freest country in the world'. To suppose that a country of 150 million free citizens could be taken over and run by a minority, that a party which, for all the eccentricity of its leader, was a Marxist party containing many with genuine democratic feelings, would yield itself to such a design, would have been a repudiation of everything in which Martov

[6] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 33 (Moscow, 1951), p. 438.

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and many others had for decades believed and worked for. 'History' taught that the main if not only danger to progressive revolutions lay in right-wing conspiracies and plots, in the threat of a Thermidor followed by a Napoleon. The Bolshevik Revolution prevailed largely because its opponents were still living in the nineteenth century, when ideologies were held to be binding representations of social and historical reality and not merely conglomerations of slogans or quasi-religious visions.

THE insistence of modern philosophy on the supreme importance of calling things by their right name finds a strong vindication in the story of the Revolution. Was there anything which was Marxist or social-democratic about the Bolshevik postulates and activities between April and October 1917? A large proportion, if not indeed a majority, of those who carried out the October coup and who stood armed guard over the infant Soviet regime during its first weeks, professed themselves left socialist-revolutionaries and outright anarchists of various hues. The allegiance or acquiescence of the working class in the large cities could not have been won by the party of Lenin and Trotsky; it had also to be the party of Marx and Engels. Most of all, the revolution could not have been preserved except in the spirit and name of Marxism. Anarchism and pacifism were sufficient to overthrow the old regime, but to rescue Russia from anarchy and dissolution one had to have an ideology with a concrete plan for an ordered society and an international order. The Bolsheviks' anarchism gained them the soldiers and sailors who stormed the Winter Palace and the Kremlin, and, much more important, the passivity of the masses who simply refused to defend any vestige of the established order and its institutions. But anarchism could not have brought to the Bolshevik side the ex-Tsarist officers who helped to win the Civil War, the engineers and other 'bourgeois specialists' who began to restore the Russian economy, and finally those members of the intelligentsia of all political persuasions who simply wanted to work for their country.

Yet as to the concrete meaning of this Marxism within the communist setting, Lenin and his successors have always been in a quandary. As militant a socialist as Rosa Luxemburg could not help wondering, for all her temperamental affinity for Bolshevism, what there was specifically Marxist about the revolution. The very name 'soviet', chosen to baptise the society and regime they had created, has epitomised the Bolsheviks' dilemma. It was a word pregnant with meaning in 1905 and 1917, symbolising to the masses of soldiers and workers that theirs was a direct form of democracy, unlike the bourgeois parliamentarism of the West. Yet literally the term was almost meaningless: Soviet society—society of councils, and very shortly it became absurd in relation to what was going on in Russia. No western parliament was as distant from real decision-making as was the whole network of soviets in Soviet Russia, say in 1925.

Having seized power and concluded peace, the Bolsheviks could

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have claimed that their objectives were to put Russia on her feet and to modernise their society. But again those were hardly specifically Marxist objectives, and in achieving them the Bolsheviks would have had the hearty support of most of the population and no need to set up a one-party state. Was it then the 'chasing out of the land-owners and capitalists' which Lenin at times presented as the *socialist* and great achievement of the Revolution? But the fact remains that it was Lenin himself who struggled for some weeks after October against what he considered (rightly, from the Marxist point of view) as a premature nationalisation of industry, who reintroduced private enterprise in the NEP, and who dreamed of persuading foreign capitalists to invest in Russia. Was socialism then 'electrification plus Soviet power', as Lenin explained on another occasion? As with many dazzling slogans, this one will hardly withstand some examination of what it actually means.

Both Lenin and Stalin were much more convincing in explaining what was *not* Marxism. Workers' control of industry, Lenin rightly said, was anarcho-syndicalism and had nothing to do with the precepts of Marx. And Stalin was equally correct when he described the plea for complete equalisation of wages as 'petty-bourgeois' in spirit rather than socialist. This was the negative use of the ideology: Marxism was being invoked to strip Soviet society precisely of those quasi-anarchist features which enjoyed the widest popular support, and the promise of which had contributed to the Bolshevik triumph in 1917 and in the Civil War.

In fact, much of the content of the ideology was replaced for Lenin and for his followers by the sense of commitment and struggle, accompanied by an almost Nietzschean revulsion against the pre-1914 world. When, at a meeting of the Comintern, one foreign communist was bold enough to suggest that a revolution after all should have the tangible results of improving the welfare of the workers, Lenin exploded, 'Revolution, he says, should be undertaken only if it does not injure too much the situation of the workers. I ask is it allowable in the communist party to speak in such a way? That is a counter-revolutionary way of speaking. . . . When we established the dictatorship of the proletariat the workers became more hungry, and their standard of living went down. The victory of the workers is impossible without sacrifices, without a temporary worsening of their situation.'[7] It would be hard to imagine a statement more at variance with the spirit and message of Marxism, with its assumption that revolution itself is a rational step designed not to destroy or humiliate the rich and powerful, but to provide a practicable way to rescue the masses from their poverty and to secure to the workers, even during the period of transition, an improvement in their material wellbeing. Communism tears Marxism away not only from its historico-deterministic moorings, but

[7] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 31 (Moscow, 1951), p. 233.

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also from much of its materialistic setting. Marx's criticism of capitalism was not that it neglects technology and the development of society's productive powers, but on the contrary that its enormous stress on and effectiveness in these respects is not translated into a steady improvement of the people's standard of living. To assert that revolution in itself and the dictatorship of the proletariat are the supreme goals of socialism is not Marxism.

THE attempt to find out what the Revolution had been fought for provided the background of the political struggles of the 1920s. With the Kronstadt rebellion went down to defeat the really populist, 'soviet' side of the revolution. From then on 'Central Committee', and later 'Politburo', would have been a more appropriate prefix to Russia than 'Soviet'. Trotsky, then Zinoviev, then Bukharin, tried to reclaim Marxism-Leninism as the solid foundation in their opposition to the ascendant current of politics in the USSR, but they found out that instead of solid ground they were standing on a disintegrating ice floe. When Trotsky in 1927 tried before the central committee to invoke those historico-rationalistic arguments which had been the staple of Marxist discourse before 1917, he aroused general hilarity. When he began: 'The worker in 1905 . . .' there were shouts that Trotsky proposed to read his collected works, that instead of talking of the worker in 1905 he should tell his judges what he had said at Yaroslav railway station a few days before, or, if he had to indulge in historical reminiscences, he should explain how he 'betrayed' Lenin between 1905 and 1914. The only use of history left in Stalin's Russia was that of a police dossier. Not the Marxian categories were the determining factors in political decisions, but first a majority of delegates, then the command of the secret police.

At the fifteenth party conference Stalin assured his hearers that were Engels alive he would exclaim: 'May the devil take the old formulas: Long live the victorious revolution in the USSR.'[8] Marxism in Russia had thus suffered complete attrition. Its use as an official theology reminds one of the cults of those primitive tribes which have forgotten the identity and functions of their gods, but keep worshipping symbols and objects for reasons they cannot explain. So with the worship of the Revolution. The regime has found it impossible to explain with any precision what exactly the great event has brought to the lives of the millions. Was socialism achieved in 1936, as Stalin declared? In 1955 his chief collaborator Molotov was publicly reproved for affirming that Russia *then* was entering the era of socialism. Nor was Khrushchev more successful in attempting to warm up the old concepts and enthusiasms. The twenty-second party congress proclaimed in 1961 that in 1980 the USSR would be entering the era of communism; but beyond a set of statistics the party ideologues exhibited considerable

[8] *15 Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoy kommunisticheskoy partii (b)* (Moscow, 1927), p. 721.

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vagueness as to how new this better world would be. And Khrushchev's successors, judging by the subsequent congress, have already forgotten about the majestic vistas for 1980 and prefer to concentrate sensibly enough on the greater abundance of consumer goods in 1970.

THIS assessment of the work of the Bolshevik Revolution can be subjected to two lines of criticism. One, which would now be classified as conservative, but really presents the point of view of pre-1914 liberalism, can only be indicated here. The trouble, it would argue, lies with the original ideology and not with the alleged or real abandonment of it by the Bolsheviks. The rigid pseudo-scientific apparatus of Marxism made those who adhered to it impotent in a revolutionary situation, and enabled the others who used it cynically to rationalise their lust for power and oppression. What is even worse, the distorted version of Marxism, genuinely believed in by the first generation of Bolsheviks, produced fanaticism rather than a rational and humane approach to the problems of social change.

What might be called the neo-Bolshevik line of criticism would still approve the main lines of Lenin's response to the Mensheviks: whatever pedantic or bookish arguments can be adduced against the Revolution or the development of communism since then, it is silly to quarrel with history or to expect progress to be achieved painlessly. The Revolution was not a rape performed by a small minority upon a huge nation, and eventually upon the whole of European civilisation. It happened because the old was decayed and incapable of regeneration. Whatever the price, the Revolution lit a beacon of hope for the oppressed masses everywhere, and in that sense it transformed and humanised even its enemies, for the challenge of communism was largely responsible for capitalism reforming itself, and being compelled to emancipate the millions held in colonial subjection. Granted that in the case of Russia it brought terrible sufferings and abuses; but those were by-products of the country's backwardness and hence of the society's inability to perform the needed task of reconstruction under civilised conditions. Yet for all the ravages of Stalinism, the still prevailing lack of freedom, communism has imparted vitality and purpose and provided the necessary material bases for the future freer life. The work of the Revolution, this argument holds, can thus be criticised in terms of nostalgia for the pre-1914 world, or, an argument applicable to all great historical events, that things could have been done 'differently'—that is, more humanely. But any rational activity, including the writing of history and projections on the future of politics, must come to terms with reality. And if so the October Revolution cannot be treated as a perversion of the 'good one' of February 1917, as a huge mistake, as a crime, or be subjected to historical nit-picking: this was good, that was bad, this went too far, etc.

Many in the West (we are not talking of communists) would find it difficult or at least embarrassing to question the main lines of the

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preceding argument, a demonstration of how much of the self-appraisal of the Russian and even of the Bolshevik Revolution has entered the mainstream of western thought.[9] But some points of this argument require a closer scrutiny.

Has Russia's advance as a world power been due to communism? It would be difficult to refute the thesis that in view of the country's size, resources, and the rate of industrial growth for some decades before 1914, it would have been difficult for Russia *not* to achieve the position she now holds as one of the world's two superpowers. There is something schizophrenic in the regime's boastfulness; the main element in its self-praise has always been that no other system has been able to overcome its own huge mistakes as successfully as the Soviet one, that no other nation could have endured as much in the way of mismanagement and crimes by its rulers as the Russians.[10]

As to the significance of the Bolshevik Revolution for the world at large, one is also constrained to make a few ungracious qualifications. That communism holds the unique key to rapid modernization is sufficiently refuted by the example of Japan. But the universality of the appeal of communism requires one comment which may serve also as the final reflection on the Bolshevik Revolution.

Communism was born out of one world war, and it experienced its greatest expansion as a consequence of another. It is strange, in view of its explicit rejection of pacifism, that the most potent attraction of communism was its vision of an eventual peaceful world order. In the wake of the bloodiest of wars the sacrifices and sufferings of a revolution appeared almost insignificant as against the promise of a world where the extinction of exploitation and imperialism would lead to the abolition of war and to an eventual universal confederation of socialist states. Capitalism had led to 1914. The Second International had proved powerless to arrest that development. Hopes for the expansion of communism after 1921 were often based on the probability of a recurrence of an imperialist war, and people as astute as Trotsky and Radek often postulated the probability and imminence of an Anglo-French or Anglo-American collision. The League of Nations was resented and abused by Soviet spokesmen not only as a possible nucleus of anti-Soviet coalitions, but as a dangerous attempt to recreate a capitalist world order. Even the absolute subordination of foreign com-

[9] And also of how unequal are the terms of the dialogue between East and West. Would a Soviet historian or philosopher reciprocate his liberal western colleague's attitude and grant that, whatever its past crimes and present deficiencies, capitalism in the last twenty years has shown an amazing power of adjustment and vitality? Or that it is likely to reform itself still further and cease entirely to be an oppressive and hostile force?

[10] 'We often take with one hand what we give with the other,' said Lenin on one occasion. And at the Victory Banquet in the Kremlin for the Soviet commanders at the end of the Second World War Stalin matched this frankness: the communist regime had made many mistakes, he said in an obvious reference to its collaboration with Hitler in 1939–41, and any other nation might well have chased out its rulers when the war broke out. But not the Russians!

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munism to the interests or rather commands of Stalin's Russia could be rationalised as the necessary preliminary to the establishment of a supra-national communist world order, which, however cruel and destructive its beginnings, would eventually spare the world its greatest scourge.

Beginning with 1948, this most hopeful legacy of the Bolshevik Revolution could no longer be maintained. The Yugoslav conflict showed that communism possessed no secret formula for resolving conflicts between states which share its basic assumptions. And with the ripening of the Sino-Soviet conflict the tenet in which, whatever their other evasions and improvisations with the doctrine, Lenin and his companions genuinely believed: that communism provided the only true internationalism and the only way of abolishing war, appears as illusory as many other hopes of 1917. In the Chinese communists' trampling upon the old formulas and cautions, extolling action over theory, the Soviet leaders might (though they are not likely to, historical imagination not being their strong point) see parallels to the Bolsheviks' adventurist pragmatism; and in their own reactions, at times pleading, at times threatening, still half-heartedly hoping for a reunion, the perplexed strivings of Plekhanov and Martov.

(Part of this essay was incorporated in a paper given at a conference held at Harvard in April on the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution; the conference proceedings will be published shortly by the Harvard University Press.)

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SECURITY AND MODERNISATION

T. H. Rigby

THE primary and only universal functions of the state are to see to the internal order of a society and its protection against external attack. Even primitive societies usually invest certain members or categories of members with special powers and responsibilities for the exercise of these functions. However, it is only in the relatively large and complex societies of more recent ages that substantial groups of members have been set aside and equipped to devote themselves primarily to these tasks. These groups constitute the framework of the state. The most distinctive feature of the state is that, whatever methods it employs for the attainment of its objects, these are ultimately backed by the sanction of force, and its effectiveness requires that in the last resort *its* force shall prevail.

States vary in a great number of ways, of which the most important are these:

(1) How much they engage in rule-*making*, as distinct from the interpretation and enforcing of existing rules.
(2) The extent to which their power to issue enforcable commands is limited within rules they are not free to alter by themselves.
(3) The extent and nature of their dependence on kinship, caste, property-owning and functional groups within their society.
(4) What functions, other than their two primary ones, they engage in. There are few social functions, whether in the field of economic production and distribution, in welfare or in the socialisation of members, which some state somewhere has not taken on.

From the standpoint adopted here, the Soviet state includes both the 'party' and the 'government'. This is of course at variance with both communist doctrine and Soviet constitutional theory, which are concerned to draw a sharp distinction between the party and the state. Even in theory, however, this distinction is blurred by the constitutional provision that the party maintains a 'guiding nucleus' in all state bodies (as well as in other social organisms), and by the view of Soviet administrative lawyers that decisions of party bodies, while not 'constituting law', nonetheless 'possess the force of law'. In practice, the involvement of full-time party officials in the decision-making process is one of the Soviet state's most obvious and best-documented features, and the most important matters of state have usually been decided in a party body formally lying outside the structure of the state, namely the Political Bureau (in 1952–66 the Presidium) of the Central Committee.

In terms of the variables listed above, the Soviet state is characterised by the following features:

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(a) Its powers of decision-making (framing and changing rules and issuing commands) are extremely broad, being limited in only minor degrees by existing rules or by dependence on functional or other social groups.

(b) The range of social functions in which it directly engages is likewise extremely broad. Most social institutions in the USSR are *state* institutions (in our sense). This can be properly appreciated only when we take account of the functions of the CPSU as a branch of the state.

Why did the Soviet state acquire these features? Was it due to the attempt to remake society in conformity with an abstract ideal, or was it rather due to the internal and external circumstances in which this attempt was made? How far did it result from the organisational principles and traditions of Bolshevism, and how far from the personal psychology of Lenin and Stalin? These question all direct our attention to important proximate causes which (along with others) should find a part in any systematic account of the development of the Soviet state. Yet behind each of them stands another question. Why was it *Russia* that set out to 'build communism'? Why were Russia's circumstances at this time such as to foster the results we have noted? Why did Bolshevism develop such organisational principles and traditions? Why did men like Lenin and Stalin come to the top in Russia?

The tsarist state emerged between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries as a response to the internal disorder and external menace afflicting the vast, culturally homogeneous but sparsely settled and vulnerable Great Russian territories. It was an eminently successful response, which explains the persistence of its basic elements till the early twentieth century. It owed this success largely to an unusual harnessing-together of the forces of ethnocentric conservatism with those of bold and sometimes revolutionary innovation. Yet there was always a tension between these forces, a tension which several times threatened and ultimately encompassed the collapse of the system. The communist regime, which aimed to abolish this tension, soon found that it could not survive and flourish without pursuing policies which revived it. Hence the recurrence throughout the Soviet period of patterns familiar from the tsarist past.

The making of tsarism

THE EMERGENCE OF TSARISM was part of a European trend from loose, decentralised political systems to centralised monarchies. Without examining here the reasons for this trend, it is worth considering some of the similarities and differences between the forms it took in Russia and in western Europe.

Everywhere it involved the replacement of local and functional autonomies by the universal jurisdiction of the monarch, of an essentially military ruling group organised on a semi-contractual lord-vassal basis

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by an essentially bureaucratic ruling group linked to the monarch on a master-servant basis, of a church separate from and coordinate with the state by a church more or less integrated with and subordinate to the state. Everywhere princes and kings figured as innovators, riding roughshod over established patterns and privileges even while claiming to protect the ancient ways, and hallowing their innovations by claims of divine right.

In much of western Europe, substantial autonomies survived the rise of absolutism, often serving as a base for new groups (especially commercial) in their efforts to influence, share, or challenge the power of the monarch and his aristo-bureaucracy. Moreover, the Reformation and the emergence of vernacular cultures transformed but did not destroy the international culture of western Christendom.

Russia's geography and international environment, however, meant that a centralised monarchy could be created there only by a *tour de force* utterly destructive of entrenched privileges and liberties and conducive to extreme forms of those basic features of the new monarchies that we have just noted.[1] The innovatory achievements of the princes of Moscow went beyond the creation of a new state to the creation of a new social order to maintain it. A class of serfs was fashioned to support the new aristo-bureaucracy which was needed to hold the state together and defend its borders. The old quasi-feudal aristocracy was 'liquidated as a class'. This whole process, moreover, manifested an unusually high level of consciousness. There were no institutional or legal survivals around which new liberties could accrete, providing commercial, land-owning, or other strata with a point of leverage against the absolute power of the monarch. The alliance of church and state to provide a bulwark against infidel and heretic reached its climax in the duumvirate and confrontation of Alexei Mikhailovich and the Patriarch Nikon, and the latter's defeat crippled the church and prepared it for reduction to the role of a state instrumentality.

In creating a centralised state where there had been none before, the Muscovites borrowed heavily, ideologically, institutionally, and technically, especially from Byzantium and the Tatars. The resultant amalgam, however, which identified the cause of true Christianity with the Russian state and people, and which elevated the prince not just to *a* king by divine right, but to *the* Caesar by divine right, possessed a xenophobic and messianic quality highly functional for the coherence and independence of the state, but profoundly resistant to further innovation. Moscow's xenophobic ideological exclusivism militated not only against useful foreign borrowings, but also against smooth internal evolution, as was shown by the disastrous reaction to Nikon's reforms, the result of a know-nothing traditionalism reinforced by an officially-inspired Latinphobia.

[1] *Cf.* G. L. Yaney, 'Law, Society and the Domestic Regime in Russia in Historical Perspective', *American Political Science Review*, June 1965. Mr Yaney's paper was largely responsible for stimulating the train of thought that has issued in the present article.

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Security, modernisation, and the state

THUS RUSSIA CONDUCTED HER SOCIAL and political revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries effectively isolated from those profound material and intellectual changes which in Europe laid the foundations of the modern world. Not that Russia was entirely unaware of the fruits of these changes. They were present as a useful but mistrusted and dangerously irritating foreign body in the Russian social organism itself, in the form of Polonised Ukrainian grammar-school teachers, Scottish soldiers, German craftsmen, and English physicians. Muscovy at the end of the seventeenth century was riven by profound contradictions, between prematurely frozen ideology and institutions on the one hand, and the need for modernisation on the other. For the institutions and ideology which had arisen as a revolutionary solution to Russia's need for internal and external security, now threatened that security by hindering spontaneous internal evolution and fruitful foreign influence, and so allowing Russia to fall dangerously behind its rapidly modernising neighbours.

If this analysis is correct, it is not too hard to see why these contradictions required a revolution from above to resolve them. For the system inhibited the spontaneous development which might have generated a modernising elite, and condemned political struggle to the sterile channels of court intrigue and Razin-type *jacqueries*. Nor should it surprise us that this pattern was to become a recurrent one in Russian history, for the solution obviously contained within itself the seeds from which the problem would be reborn. Peter preserved the basic elements of the tsarist system—the absolute monarch served by an aristo-bureaucracy commanding a bonded peasantry—but sought to orient it towards technical modernisation, by administrative rationalisation to render the system responsive to his initiatives, by purging the security and ideological machines of conservative opposition, and by technical training and attempts to open careers in the bureaucracy to men of talent and technical qualifications. In so doing, however, he raised to an even higher level that concentration of the power of creative social initiative at the apex of the state machine, that inhibition of spontaneous evolution, which had made a Peter necessary. Furthermore, the attempt to create a modernising elite from above, dictated as it was by the needs of external security, was destined to undermine the internal coherence and security of Russia itself. For not only did it greatly deepen the existing cleavage between the elite and the masses, it also opened up divisions within the elite itself. Peter had sought only to equip his servants with western techniques, but it was inevitable that some of them should be infected by the social and intellectual values of the societies that produced these techniques, and become thereby alienated from Russia's own political and social order. The path from Peter's first 'exchange students' in artillery and navigation to the revolutionary intelligentsia of the nineteenth century is a familiar one,

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as is the reaction of the bulk of the aristo-bureaucracy into ultra-conservatism. What is less often appreciated is the paradoxical character this gave to the process of modernisation in Russia.

The impatience with Russian backwardness and the orientation towards radical change which Peter had attempted to build into his aristo-bureaucracy now became the monopoly of a counter-elite regarded by the former as a dangerous threat to stability and order. For most of the time, when their primary concern was precisely for stability and order, successive monarchs were bound to value the conservative, ethnocentric inertia of the aristo-bureaucratic class. Yet it was the monarch who alone had the power to initiate major social change, and when the need for change was forced on his attention (usually as a result of war) he was 'objectively' bound to ally himself with the system's critics and to 'betray' its supporters. It was the monarch's Janus-like role as defender of order and fountainhead of modernisation that explains the reign of an Alexander I, which begins as a conspiracy of reformers and ends as the tyranny of Arakcheev, or that of Alexander II, whose first acts are greeted by the counter-elite as the triumph of virtue and by the bulk of the aristo-bureaucracy with dismay, yet who lives to earn the execration of the counter-elite and death at their hands.

The hypertrophy of the tsarist state, by origin a response to the needs of internal order and external protection, both induced and in turn was reinforced by its monopoly of modernising initiative. It aided modernisation by permitting the imposition of radical changes, but hindered it by inhibiting unauthorised borrowing from abroad and spontaneous social evolution. It made for macro-innovation but held back micro-innovation. It could achieve the abolition of serfdom but not the spread of productive farming methods, the creation of a new civil service but not the evolution of institutions representing particular interests. The inadequacy of this modernisation-by-delayed-but-massive-response became increasingly apparent as the pace of technical and social change quickened in the West in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As in the seventeenth century, the new techniques, to the extent they were found in Russia, were increasingly the fruits of foreign enterprise. Technical and social backwardness led to military defeats which threatened not only the credibility of tsarism as Russia's protector but also the ability of the regime to impose discipline on the masses. Hence the accelerated growth and desperation of the critical counter-elite, the deepening conservative reaction in the bulk of the aristo-bureaucracy, the zig-zag from concession to suppression that led straight to 1917.

The Bolsheviks repeat the pattern

OCTOBER 1917 BROUGHT TO POWER a section of the counter-elite, a section which manifested in extreme form its disdain for the state and promotion of innovation at the expense of stability and order. For the bolsheviks sought to refashion society in such a way that the state, that is social

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authority backed by force, would be redundant. For a transitional period, indeed, the state would be necessary to protect the revolution against its internal and external enemies and to build the new society, but no special qualifications would be needed by the proletarians and other members of the masses who were to man it. The bolsheviks themselves, organised as a consciously-disciplined party, would show the way, while the masses, perceiving it to be in their best interests, would freely accept their guidance, and could be relied on to discipline those of their number too stupid or selfish to see where their best interests lay.

The bolsheviks emerged from the Civil War with their utopianism of ends intact, but disabused of their utopianism of means. Establishment of the Soviet regime had been a *tour de force* which, like the establishment of the tsarist regime some centuries earlier, had led to an extreme hypertrophy of the state. Problems of external protection and internal order took priority over all other concerns, and authority backed by force permeated all areas of social life. Far from 'any housewife' being capable of performing the functions of the state, these called for expertise, for experience, for the professional. Far from the masses freely accepting bolshevik guidance, their cooperation had to be ruthlessly compelled, and other parties offering alternative policies forcibly suppressed. Far from conscious discipline sufficing to ensure the coherence of the party itself, groups of communists critical of the leadership were made liable to expulsion and the membership was subjected to a massive purge.

Even giving maximum weight to the Civil War in explaining this hypertrophy of the state, however, and its concomitant paralysis of spontaneous social response and innovation, we have not fully explained why the 'building of socialism' in Russia should have proved so similar a 'revolution from above' to all the major social reorganisations of the tsarist era. Here subjective factors clearly reinforced objective ones: the bolshevik leaders *could not conceive it otherwise.* And their inability to conceive radical social change other than as a programme consciously willed and administratively implemented they owed not to Marxism, but to the Russian political culture that had nurtured them. It was not their adherence to specific forms of conspiratorial organisation that made the Leninists the most Russian (and most successful) of all Russian Marxist groups, but rather their constant stressing of 'consciousness' against 'spontaneity', and their identification of spontaneity with chaos, inertia, aimlessness, formlessness.

In the triumph of 'consciousness' over 'spontaneity' no factor was of more fateful importance than the integration of the party in the state. This was not an immediate consequence of the taking of power, nor did it follow with inevitable logic from bolshevik ideas. It was rather an evolution that took many years to complete, though the decisive step was the decision to create a full-time party apparatus in 1919. There is much that remains unclear about this decision and about the subsequent rapid evolution of the party apparatus as a key

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organ of rule directing and supervising the machinery of government. What can be said is that the decision reflected a widespread concern at the withering of the internal political life of the party and at its lack of influence on the day-to-day work of government; that no-one seems to have proposed any alternative way of reviving the party than by endowing it with a full-time officialdom; and that the assertion of party influence was seen as requiring this officialdom to function primarily as a chain of command directed from the centre, superimposed on the organs of the state and freely disposing of party members. As Lenin was to put it in a note dictated a year before his death, 'for the worker and peasant state—a state constructed on completely new principles—in order to get it functioning properly, it was demanded and is still demanded now, that the members of the party be concentrated in it in a most hierarchical framework'.[2]

To non-communists it has always seemed obvious that to entrust the life of local party organisations to officials whose tenure was conditional on their securing quick and efficient fulfilment of commands from above was to deliver the *coup de grâce* to those democratic internal processes and that vigorous and critical discussion, belief in which the bolsheviks had imbibed from the traditions of European Marxism. The bolsheviks themselves, however, who regarded it as an elementary 'rotten liberal' error to 'make a fetish' of outward political forms, were genuinely dismayed when the bureaucracy they had created began to behave bureaucratically. The careerism, the red-tape, the nepotism, the crippling of initiative and smothering of criticism—these could be due only to habits carried over from tsarism, to permitting officials to lose touch with the workers, to allowing self-seekers into office. The remedies were to punish offenders more surely and severely, to appoint more workers, to turn them out to grass occasionally. This meant streamlining the party's Central Control Commission and the Commissariat of Worker-Peasant Inspection, and reforming the party's personnel machinery. In thus seeking an essentially bureaucratic solution to the evils of bureaucracy, the bolsheviks revealed a blind spot that they have never lost. They had no difficulty in identifying the evils of bureaucracy, but failed to recognise bureaucracy as one particular form of structuring social action, consisting essentially of a hierarchy of command, and possessing its own characteristic vices and virtues. And here again we see the influence of Russian political experience, which knew no effective method of structuring social action other than through a hierarchy of command, and therefore took it for granted.

As for democratic processes in party and government, these were desirable, but not essential, so long as the right policies were being carried out. Indeed in the Civil War, as in the underground, concern with democratic processes was usually seen as a hindrance to effective action. Of course this was unfortunate, and of course it would be

[2] 'What are we to do with Rabkrin?', *Sochineniya*, vol. 45, p. 444.

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repaired with victory. Hence the programmes of 'reviving the soviets' and of inculcating 'workers democracy' in the party, which received such prominence in the early and mid-twenties, though increasingly coloured with hypocrisy, were in large part, and especially at the beginning, sincerely conceived and promoted. If these programmes remained stillborn, it was not only because their realisation depended on the efforts of established officials and cliques who had a vested interest in preventing opposition emerging in their bailiwicks, but also because everyone concerned recognised that democracy must be limited within the bounds of 'correct' policies. Never questioning that democracy *for* the people must prevail over democracy *by* the people, the good bolshevik took alarm whenever electors, soviets, party rank-and-file, or committee members failed to act as recommended by their officials. This could only mean that they were misled or inadequately informed and indoctrinated, or alternatively that the recommendations were incorrect. It was the responsibility of higher echelons to establish which was the case and take corrective action. There is no evidence that the bolsheviks of the twenties ever realised that if people were not allowed to err, and there was held to be a 'correct' solution to all significant problems, then the operation of democratic processes must be limited to trivia. And this is another blind spot that their successors have never lost.

Political struggle and opposition

IT IS IN THE CONTEXT of these two blind spots that we should consider the history of political struggle and opposition within the Soviet regime. The 'Left Communists' of 1918 consisted of a number of prominent party members who opposed the decisions taken on certain important issues, especially the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, and thereupon withdrew from positions of authority so as not to be involved in their implementation. Since, however, they showed sufficient bolshevik discipline to abstain from working for the reversal of the policies they opposed, and indeed sought no continuing identity as a group offering alternative policies to the leadership, they represented no challenge to basic Leninist principles and were soon readmitted to leading positions.

The 'Workers Opposition' and 'Democratic Centralists' of 1920–21 were of an entirely different order. The bureaucratisation of the party after 1919 and its integration in the state meant that the critical discussion of current political and social issues, a function heretofore accepted as proper for party members, was increasingly limited to groups lying outside the mainstream of the active day-to-day life of the party, who were increasingly alienated from the busy officials of the party apparatus who merely 'had a job to do'. Unlike the Left Communists, the Workers Opposition and Democratic Centralists sought a continuing identity as groups criticising the incumbent leadership, proposing alternative policies, and advocating radical changes in existing political arrangements. We should note, however, that though these groups desired

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changes going further than the leadership were prepared to accept, directed towards combating bureaucratisation and rendering the machine more responsive to the party rank-and-file and the workers, they had no clearer realisation than did the leadership that the root of these problems lay in the crucial bureaucratic functions with which the party was now endowed.

The trade union discussion on the eve of the tenth party congress in 1921, in which different groups within the leadership as well as the major opposition groups publicly debated an important policy issue and competed for support in party elections, suggested that even within the framework of the one-party state devices might be found for diluting the concentration of social initiative at the apex of the bureaucratic hierarchy and for institutionalising the representation of different opinions and interests. Yet was there ever a chance that such discussions would become accepted as a normal and regular feature of Soviet political life? Certainly it was the wave of peasant violence and industrial unrest culminating in the Kronstadt revolt that swung the tenth congress delegates behind the Politbureau proposal to ban 'factionalism' and dissolve existing 'factional' groups. But one can also detect a widespread feeling that there was something unhealthy or dangerous about the behaviour and processes that emerged in the trade union discussion, quite apart from any threat they might involve of disunity in the face of new dangers to the regime, and this indicated the formidable obstacles entrenched in the bolshevik tradition that any trend to institutionalise these processes and behaviour would have encountered.

The events of 1921 repeated a pattern so frequently associated with spells of relative liberalisation in Russia, when a flurry of apprehension about external or internal security has prompted a reassertion of close bureaucratic control, which has proved fatally easy simply because non-bureaucratic politics have such weak roots in Russian life.

The decision of the tenth congress in effect outlawed all informal political association and communication in Russia. Even before this the party secretariat had forbidden unauthorised lateral communication between party committees and officials, as well as vertical communication between the party groups working at different echelons in non-party bodies. Meanwhile, as we have noted, political expression and activity in the soviets, party committees, and other pseudo-democratic institutions, were restricted to what their officials recognised as conforming to current national policies. So, except in so far as party-approved editors chose to publish divergent views, all political communication, association, and initiative in Russia were henceforth concentrated in the bureaucracy and focussed on the formal hierarchical channels of the party.

The drift to absolute rule by an oligarchy of leaders institutionalised in the Politbureau and directing the various bureaucratic hierarchies was now complete. The crucial importance of the party machine in the structure of their power obviously opened the possibility of this oligarchy

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being converted to a dictatorship of whichever oligarch exercised primary responsibility for the party machine. The general acceptance in the party of the principle of collective leadership represented by the Politbureau was, however, a severe obstacle to the establishment of a dictatorship of the General Secretary. Though Stalin was ultimately to achieve this, it required patient effort over several years, and an indirect strategy, which consisted of using the machine to install supporters in the party congress and Central Committee, and then using the formal rights of these bodies to adjudicate in disputes within the Politbureau and to change its membership; and meanwhile securing his rear by building up a preponderant influence in the armed forces and police. Once he had achieved this, the key positions in the government, including that of Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, the one formal post in the regime held by Lenin, were his to dispose of at will, without his ever having to struggle openly for them.

It was in 1919–21 that the basic structure of the Soviet political system was forged. Through all the profound changes in Soviet society since then, the structure of power has remained essentially unchanged. After 1921, as was to become immediately apparent, opposition could take only two forms: illegal opposition, and opposition organised in sections of the bureaucracy and enjoying protection within the supreme leadership.

Those who refused to conform to the tenth congress decisions soon found themselves outside the party, and if they still wanted to try to influence events, could do so only through such clandestine organisations as the 'Workers Group' and 'Workers Truth', which were quite 'properly' dealt with by the political police. Since in principle *no* utterance or association between individuals had a right to existence unless authorised by the bureaucracy as 'in accordance with the interests of the working people and with the aim of strengthening the socialist system', as the 1936 constitution was later to put it, it now became a question of administrative discretion which unauthorised utterances constituted 'counter-revolutionary propaganda' and which unauthorised associations constituted 'counter-revolutionary organisation'. There is a great practical difference between punishing the unauthorised activities of the Workers Group leader Miasnikov or the writers Siniavsky and Daniel, and the prophylactic terror of Stalin, but the latter was no more against the principles of Soviet communism than the Papal Inquisition was against the principles of medieval Catholicism. If it was required by the interests of the revolution, it was 'correct'. It was wrong only if ill-judged, for instance if it caused *unnecessary* suffering, or even, as Khrushchev was later to claim, harmed the revolution by destroying valuable personnel and paralysing initiative.

The extent and character of intra-bureaucratic opposition has depended, of course, on the way power is held at the top. At periods when no individual has strongly dominated the leadership, as for instance in 1922–29, 1953–57, or since 1964, personal rivalries or

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divergent views within the leadership might find expression in semi-autonomous and occasionally contradictory decision-making in different sections of the bureaucracy, jurisdictional struggles between them, and manoeuvres to redistribute control over them. In these circumstances, divergences might overflow from the corridors of power to find partial expression in the press or at meetings of the pseudo-democratic institutions of party or government. In contrast to the situation before 1921, however, this could now happen only if and in so far as it was contrived through the bureaucratic machinery. It was the one-ninth of the iceberg that lay above the surface of intra-bureaucratic struggle. Of course the nature of political struggle under a divided leadership is greatly affected by the individuals and issues involved and the contingent circumstances. Obviously a struggle between such giants as Trotsky, Stalin, and Bukharin, articulated in terms of whether a socialist society can be created in Russia, and if so, how, is bound to seem, and indeed to *be*, grander than the struggle between such epigones as Malenkov, Molotov, and Khrushchev, articulated in terms of how much should be invested in the manufacture of consumer goods and whether or not to open up marginal lands to grain cultivation. But the forms and limitations of these struggles and the manner of their resolution remain basically unchanged.

When one individual dominates, political struggle has been concentrated on competition for office, for the ear and goodwill of the boss, for efficient fulfilment of tasks assigned to the apparatus under one's supervision, for the appointment of adherents to positions where they can enhance one's own programmes and reputation at the expense of one's rival's. Again, of course, individuals, issues, and circumstances are important. Rudzutak, Ordzhonikidze, and Kirov, surrounding the Stalin of 1932, were bound to behave rather differently from Malenkov, Beria, and Khrushchev, surrounding the Stalin of 1952, let alone Kirichenko, Kozlov, and Brezhnev, surrounding the Khrushchev of 1959. Yet again the rules of the game were basically the same. Obviously, too, individual power is a matter of degree. It took Stalin nearly a decade of personal power to place himself completely beyond the need to consider the views and interests of his entourage, and neither Lenin nor Khrushchev ever achieved that position. Clearly complete personal control over the political police is a vital factor in the boss's relations with his entourage. There is much force in the view of ' socialist legality ' as an obstacle to ' the cult of personality ', tautological though this statement may be in terms of the ordinary Soviet uses of these euphemisms. In all periods of individual dominance, however, irrespective of how tyrannically or moderately that power is exercised, open opposition to the boss has suffered from that lack of institutional basis that has frustrated political opposition in general ever since 1921. Such opposition could take only clandestine conspiratorial forms, like the unsuccessful conspiracy to replace Stalin by Kirov in 1934, the unsuccessful conspiracy to remove Khruschev in 1957, and the successful conspiracy to

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remove him in 1964. And the unsuccessful conspiracies, like all unauthorised political initiatives, were *ipso facto* identifiable as counter-revolutionary crimes, and whether or not they were punished as such became a matter merely of political judgment and expediency.

Security and modernisation since 1917

A COMPLEX DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP between demands for security and for modernisation has been the mainspring of Soviet political and social history no less than of pre-revolutionary Russia. Though dedicated to totally refashioning society, the Soviet regime has been from the beginning so preoccupied with problems of internal and external security that in practice only those changes that appear to enhance that security have been allowed to go forward.

As in tsarist Russia, the impulse to radical social or political change or to programmes of modernisation has often been closely linked with particular problems of security. The institutions of War Communism owed as much to the striving for maximum mobilisation as to revolutionary utopianism. The resistance of the boyars under Ivan IV and of the kulaks under Stalin was aroused by innovations affecting their interests, and the solution to the security problem so caused was in both cases the revolutionary one of their 'liquidation as a class'.[3]

Stalin's forced industrialisation in the 1930s, and all the institutional and social consequences that flowed therefrom, were stimulated by considerations of external security no less than were the revolutionary innovations of Peter the Great. 'To slacken the tempo would mean falling behind', said Stalin in his famous speech to industrial executives in 1931, 'and those who fall behind get beaten. . . . One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered for falling behind, for her backwardness. . . . Do you want our socialist fatherland to be beaten and lose its independence? If you do not want this you must put an end to its backwardness in the shortest possible time and develop genuine Bolshevik tempo in building up its socialist system of economy'.[4]

[3] It seems possible, as has recently been argued, that the mass collectivisation of 1929-30 was not premeditated by Stalin, that he believed his existing administrative machinery strong enough even without collectivisation to extract the surplus from the peasantry necessary to support the five-year plan, and that the massive effort to re-establish order when peasant resistance proved more formidable than was expected both made possible the mass formation of kolkhozes and required this as ideological cover. See O. A. Narkiewicz, 'Stalin, War Communism and Collectivization', *Soviet Studies*, July 1966. In much the same way, serfdom was not premeditated as an essential support for the tsar's new service nobility, but the unwillingness of the peasants to serve the new nobility prompted Ivan IV and his successors to revoke the peasants' 'right of departure' in the octave of St George's Day, thus creating the essential elements of serfdom. In both cases, when obstacles were encountered to changes initiated by the state, the state did not shrink from even more revolutionary changes in order to impose its innovations.

[4] Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow, 1945), pp. 355–56. Stalin was later to treat the defeat of nazism as a vindication of his imposed socialism (in his 1946 election speech) in much the same way as Peter, and later historians, saw his final victory over the Swedes at Tilsit as the crowning achievement of his innovatory zeal.

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But if the demands of security have sometimes reinforced or even provoked radical innovation, they have also sometimes been responsible for obstructing or even reversing it. It was largely in the interests of internal order, discipline, and control that the bolsheviks abandoned War Communism and partially revived capitalism in the 1920s, and that they later threw their support behind Russian nationalism at the expense of 'cosmopolitanism', and behind old-fashioned patterns in family life, education, the arts, etc., at the expense of 'progressivism' and 'modernism'. Security considerations certainly played a part in the early 1930s, in 1953–54, and perhaps too in 1964–65, when elements of peasant enterprise recently under attack were granted a reprieve. It was solely in the interests of security that the campaign against religion was moderated after the outbreak of war in 1941. How many innovations in science (e.g. cybernetics) or economic life (e.g. Liberman's proposals in 1962) were held up by fear of the unknown consequences of disturbing established dogma or procedure? One is reminded of the many excellent projects of reform which were shelved by successive tsarist governments out of apprehension for the potential disturbance to stability and order.

But it is not only in canalising change that security has interacted with innovation in Soviet Russia in ways reminiscent of the pre-revolutionary past. As we have already noted, the hypertrophy of the state was in both cases the product of the needs of internal order and external defence, and of the will to initiate and control radical change. Once this hypertrophied state was a fact, however, any initiative from below seemed like a bid to diminish it and therefore a threat to security, and the consequent paralysis of spontaneous change meant the constant accumulation of pools of backwardness which only intervention from the summit could then eliminate. As a consequence Soviet Russia, like tsarist Russia, has been macro-revolutionary but micro-conservative. The Moscow metro coexists with the *izba*, moon-probes with the abacus. This phenomenon was first noted by Lenin, one of the acutest observers of the emergent Soviet society. 'Our present way of life', he wrote in 1922, 'combines to a striking degree features of the desperately bold with timidity of thought before the most minor changes.' [5]

A further similarity was the combination of a messianic universalism with a marked ethnocentrism. The credentials of the Soviet regime, as of early tsarism, rested heavily on the claim to incarnate History's (God's) supreme purposes for humanity. Very soon these purposes were being identified with the interests of the Russian state, and the more fortuitous and superficial, as well as the more entrenched and profound, features of Russian life and character were being hallowed by association. Conversely, foreign ways were perceived not only as curious or distasteful, but as coloured with falseness or iniquity. Russians were encouraged to see their country as a bulwark against western wickedness under

[5] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 45, p. 400.

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Nicholas I no less than under Brezhnev. These official attitudes were superimposed upon ingrained Russian responses, which combined a certain tolerance and willingness to learn from the foreigner with assimilationist assumptions. The results sometimes verged on the absurd: the arch-xenophobe Dostoevsky proclaiming the 'pan-humanity' of the Russians, Khrushchev befriending the Americans and helping himself to their techniques—but all on the assumption that *their* grandchildren would live under *his* social system.

The final parallel we should note between the interaction of national security and national renovation in tsarist and communist Russia is its effect of dividing the elite. In the style of Peter the Great, the Soviet leaders sought to create from the party membership and the new technical intelligentsia an elite trained and dedicated to modernisation. Like their eighteenth century predecessors, however, the Soviet elite, required to serve as bureaucrats in a milieu where every unauthorised action smelt of treason and every unauthorised utterance smelt of heresy, quickly fell into habits of conformism and conservatism, limiting their innovatory efforts to approved channels. There have always been individuals, however, who have internalised the modernising ethos, are thereby more or less alienated from the timid, conservative bureaucracy, and are too disturbed by the country's pools of backwardness to limit their reforming impulse within approved official programmes. These constitute the Soviet counter-elite. The pre-revolutionary counter-elite, though centred in the intelligentsia, had wider ramifications in the educated public (*obshchestvo*), making of the latter in the late tsarist period a *political* force peacefully though critically coexisting with the state. Although officially dissolved in a 'new socialist intelligentsia', consisting of the twenty million or so held to be 'engaged in mental work', an intelligentsia defined in the old sense by attitudes rather than by education or employment, placing social, intellectual, or aesthetic values above official relationships, has never wholly disappeared. Moreover, *this* intelligentsia has continued to exert an influence in wider sections of the educated public, making Soviet public opinion (*obshchestvennost*), despite massive efforts to domesticate it to the party, a separate factor to be taken into account by political leaders.

Of course this comparison must be heavily qualified. The vastly improved machinery of control, repression, and indoctrination deployed by the Soviet bureaucratic elite has made organisation and communication far more difficult for the Soviet counter-elite than for their precursors in tsarist times. The role of illegal groups and publications such as existed throughout the nineteenth century, has been insignificant since the 1920s, and of course there has been nothing resembling the open opposition parties and newspapers of 1905–17. Yet the importance of the counter-elite should not be identified with *organised* opposition. It could indeed be argued that its greatest influence in tsarist Russia was exerted through amorphous though pervasive personal channels, and

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through esoteric content and implied values contained in permitted publication. Indeed, the downfall of tsarism itself was not the work of any organisation of the counter-elite, though its influence over many decades, both in preparing 'society' and the 'masses' for the possibility of change, and in undermining the assurance of the bureaucracy, was clearly an essential factor. The unorganised character of the Soviet counter-elite, then, is no measure of its potential influence. Though minimal at the height of Stalin's dictatorship, this influence has been a continuing factor in Soviet political life. It was an important (though certainly not decisive) ingredient in the context of attitudes and ideas in which the leadership struggles of the 1920s were fought. Since 1953, the reaction against Stalinism has significantly revived its influence.

For that curious ambivalence of the political leadership towards the counter-elite which we observed under tsarism has been reactivated in post-Stalin Russia by attempts to overcome areas of backwardness in Soviet life and to renovate obsolescent processes and institutions. Insofar as existing patterns are seen by the leadership as effective to their ends, the counter-elite, with their suggestions and criticisms, are merely trouble-makers. But insofar as such patterns are seen as *ineffective* the counter-elite, enjoying by bureaucratic default a monopoly of innovatory zeal and creativity, must serve as a source of ideas. Moreover, as the bureaucratic elite, set in conformist postures and upset by the conversion of old heresies into new dogma, proves resistant to decreed change, and other leaders seek to capitalise on this resistance, the innovating leader is driven to court the counter-elite and to throw its support into the balance. A clear illustration of the ambivalent relationship between the innovating leader and the counter-elite can be found in Khrushchev's dealings with Soviet scientists, economists, and artists.

Borkenau's characterisation of the old intelligentsia as those members of Russian society who had fallen under the spell of European civilisation, though one-sided, contains a truth that retains its importance today. In post-Stalin Russia, the problem of the counter-elite is in large part the problem of western influence. All bursts of modernisation in Russia since Peter the Great have been prompted, directly or indirectly, by the challenge of the technologically advanced West, and it is the West, therefore, that has provided the standards and models of modernisation. But it is as true in the 1950s and 1960s as it was in the eighteenth century that a generation cannot be brought up to admire and emulate foreign technique without some of its number coming to admire and emulate other aspects of the culture that has produced it. You cannot import foreign technical ideas wholesale without risking some ideological contraband. Thus the *petit maître* of the 1750s and the dandy of the 1820s are matched by the *stiliaga* of the 1950s and the beatlomane of the 1960s, while Catherine's young guard officers with their Voltaire are matched by Brezhnev's economics graduates with their Rostow. For

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most Russians, western contraband has always served simply as titillating exotica to be discarded when inconvenient; wherever the attitudes of the counter-elite are found, however, it serves as a constant stimulus to dissatisfaction and source of ideas for change. It is this westernising posture of the counter-elite, confronted by the ethnocentric-universalist posture of the bureaucratic elite, today no less than a century ago, that explains the depth and sharpness of their mutual antagonism. It is hard to see in this a threat to the political or social order: the bureaucracy is well in control and likely to stay so. But it is a built-in weakness, distorting the formation of rational solutions of internal and foreign problems.

The future

SOCIAL CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION during the coming decade could affect the patterns not just of the past half-century, but of the past half-millennium. For that concentration of social initiative at the apex of a hypertrophied state, which has lasted since Muscovite times, now hangs in the balance.

The existing socio-political order in Russia has amply demonstrated its efficacy for macro-innovation. It has proved the possibility of a non-capitalist method of industrialisation, provided the material and organisational basis to defeat the nazi invasion, mounted one of the world's two major space programmes, and attained world standards in selected areas of production and intellectual life. These are impressive achievements by any standards, and a legitimate object of Soviet pride.

But Soviet society has now entered the phase when it is micro-innovation, not macro-innovation, that is pressingly required. Within the framework of an advanced industrial order there remain vast swamps of backwardness, inefficiency, and *nekulturnost.* Crash programmes and administrative reorganisations have demonstrated, most recently in Khrushchev's repeated attempts to overcome the defects of industry and agriculture, their complete inadequacy to deal with problems on this level. But these problems *must* be dealt with, if the claims of the Soviet regime to have established a higher social order, and the sacrifices involved in doing so, are to be vindicated before their own people and the world. And with increased cultural contacts since 1953 (necessary to avoid isolation from revolutionary technological developments abroad) enough people, both in Russia and the West, *do know* that the quality of Soviet life still compares abominably in so many respects. This question has acquired increasing urgency as the nuclear stalemate and the reaction from Chinese ' bast-shoes communism ' have led Soviet politicians and ideologists to concentrate more and more on the provision of a better life, which all peoples will insist on emulating, as the goal of their international mission.

It seems abundantly clear that this goal cannot be reached unless Soviet leaders are prepared to allow the command hierarchy to be

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supplemented or supplanted by other methods of structuring social action in large areas of national life. There is an enormous scope for self-regulating social mechanisms generating their own immediate tasks in terms of broad basic goals (which may be politically-determined or influenced), and with built-in feedback to keep them efficient and on the right path. Such mechanisms already predominate in one area, namely science. What are the prospects for their extension to others, especially the economy?

On the ideological level, the obstacles seem formidable, but not necessarily decisive. On the face of it, the commitment to communism as a stateless society would appear to *favour* self-regulatory mechanisms. However, official discussion and pronouncements over recent years on the transition to communism and the nature of communist society have tended to habituate Soviet people to the indefinite perpetuation of the command hierarchy as the normal framework of social action. True, people will receive from society 'according to their needs' and 'self-administration' is to replace government by paid officials. But the determination of needs will not be left to the whim of the individual, and self-administration will be channelled through a plethora of nationally coordinated public organisations. Communism, in fact, will be a superlatively organised, planned, and disciplined society. Certainly, people will be so conditioned to conform their personal desires and impulses to the needs of society that no special apparatus of repression will be needed, but there will always be individuals who refuse to conform, and society must preserve the right, and the means, of compelling them. For a very long time to come, the party will need to retain and indeed to increase its supervising and coordinating role, even under communism.

Meanwhile we have the example of those many voluntary organisations—from street committees and sanitary brigades to voluntary militia and comradely courts—which have come to supplement official institutions in the performance of certain social functions, and which are held to manifest in embryo the outlines of the future communist society. These have so far shown no signs of developing action patterns enabling them to function other than as auxiliaries of the great command hierarchies of party, government, and trade unions; far from their signifying a narrowing of the coercive order (which we have identified as the state) they have simply rendered its action more pervasive and arbitrary.

Existing doctrine on communist society, then, will need to be substantially revised if a large expansion of self-regulating mechanisms of social action is to become possible in the next few years. The domination of the Soviet ideological establishment by old party hands, unaccustomed to the idea of pursuing social objectives except through programmes administered by command hierarchies, will make this revision difficult. Already, however, theoreticians grappling with the problem of accommodating recent intellectual and social developments—particularly cybernetics and the market elements now present in the Soviet and other

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communist economies—have demonstrated the possibility of a conceptual framework within which such a revision could occur.[6] Moreover, it would not be surprising if maturer consideration did not reveal much of the theorising about communism over the past decade to have been coloured by that hastiness, superficiality, and subjectivity which are now recognised as characteristic of the Khrushchev era.

Until recently, the introduction of self-regulating (market) processes in the economy has been unthinkable simply because the market was identified with capitalism. Hence, of course, the great importance of Yugoslavia's demonstration of the possibility (and efficacy) of a *socialist* market; and the fact that this was pioneered *not* in the West, but in what might be regarded as in some degree an extension of Russia's historical mission, greatly reduces the ideological and psychological obstacles to accepting its relevance for the USSR. Moreover, as market elements spread rapidly in other east European economies, there will be political advantages for the Soviet Union, given the present state of communist international relations, in keeping pace with and if possible giving a lead to this process.[7]

A more fundamental obstacle than specific ideological tenets to the growth of self-regulating mechanisms in Soviet society is that preference for 'consciousness' to 'spontaneity' which is so central to Leninism and which strikes so many answering chords in Russian political culture. An assumption that still runs through nearly all political discussion in the Soviet Union is that there is a 'correct' solution to all problems, which may be perceived by those combining practical experience with correct theory, who furthermore have an obligation to guide others in the application of this correct solution and prevent them from erring. And there is a second assumption—which remains widespread despite decades of seeking to harness individual material incentives to plan fulfilment—that, unless closely guided and controlled by those equipped with correct theory, effort directed towards immediate individual or group ends will tend towards social chaos and defeat the larger ends of society.

This largely accounts for the fact that mathematical techniques making for improved economic planning and administration have been taken up so wholeheartedly, and 'economic methods' (i.e. market-oriented techniques) so half-heartedly, in recent years; and why the 1965 economic reform, while cautiously increasing the scope of 'economic methods' of coordinating economical effort, placed its main emphasis on a counter-revolution in economic *administration* restoring the highly centralised system evolved under Stalin. On the other hand,

[6] See especially Iu. Levada, 'Kiberneticheskie metody i sotsiologiia', *Kommunist*, No. 14, 1965.

[7] The importance of the experience of negotiation and compromise in communist international relations, particularly among the Comecon countries, in habituating the Soviet leaders to decision-making other than by command-hierarchy, is discussed in my paper 'The Deconcentration of Power in the USSR, 1953-1964', in J. D. B. Miller and T. H. Rigby, eds., *The Disintegrating Monolith: Pluralist Trends in World Communism* (Canberra, A.N.U., 1965).

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one might argue that since the question of economic methods poses so directly the issue of consciousness v. spontaneity, the recognition of their propriety in principle marks a revolutionary step forward in Russian social thinking.

The attachment of Soviet communists to 'consciousness' has always derived much strength from its identification with science. Its application in practice, however, has usually shown greater affinities with religious than with scientific ways of thinking. It has tended to produce solutions made in the light of irrelevant external considerations, while the relevant facts are shunned, are unknown, or unknowable. Thus much of the 'consciousness' in Soviet life has always been 'false consciousness'. With the rapid extension of *genuinely* scientific habits of thought, however, 'false consciousness' is bound to be eroded. In the Soviet Union today, it is now recognised that to impose 'truths' and guidelines deduced from Marxist-Leninist theory on the work of scientists is to condemn them to sterility, that those immediately involved must feel free to make choices that may turn out to be wrong, and that scientific truth can be approached only by the constant critical testing of currently-accepted theory. The Soviet Union will have a right to regard itself as a truly scientific society when the same is acknowledged to apply to economic activity, the social sciences, and other areas of life. Here, of course, we are in the realm of long-term trends, but science *is* the most prestigious activity in the Soviet Union today, it *must* proceed largely by self-regulating processes, and its likely influence on the patterns of social action in the Soviet Union therefore seems clear.

The most formidable potential obstacle to the spread of self-regulating mechanisms in Soviet society, however, is the implications this would have for the role of the party. Since 1919 the party apparatus has reserved for itself responsibility for major decisions arising in the day-to-day activities of all social institutions and organisations, and exercised constant supervision over these activities, probing, calling to account, and demanding corrections. Though this has had certain unfortunate consequences for the party, there was clearly much to be said for maintaining some such machinery of overall supervision and coordination so long as the regime was seeking to run the whole range of social activities through a system of command hierarchies. Such constant external intervention, however, is of course deadly to the proper functioning of any self-regulating mechanism—and this applies no less in the arts and the economy than in science—which presupposes autonomously-interacting participants orienting their decisions systematically and unequivocally towards the 'market'. It is obviously not enough that the party exercise its day-to-day supervising and controlling function without resorting to 'petty tutelage' and 'supplanting' of managements, government officials, etc.—which it has been constantly but vainly enjoined to do ever since 1921. If the CPSU is to have a chance of achieving its world mission, self-regulating patterns of social action will have to be given the same scope in the economy and elsewhere

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as already in the natural sciences, and this means that the party must be prepared to confine itself to defining the overall scale and direction of effort, abstaining from *any* attempt to exercise day-to-day supervision and control endowed with 'the force of law'. It means, in other words, a reversal of that process of integration with the state that began in 1919. The party would remain master of the state, by continuing to determine the main lines of policy and to monopolise key posts, but would abdicate its responsibility for controlling the detailed execution of policy. This could lead to a renaissance of the political as distinct from the administrative role of the party; detached from bureaucratic preoccupations, it could maintain a constant critical and objective scrutiny of social developments, engage in creative forward thinking, canvass and appraise policy alternatives, explore theoretical issues free of the tyranny of political pragmatism, and apply itself more effectively to the political and ideological education of the public. Any trend to disengage the party from the state, however, would undoubtedly encounter resistance from members of the party apparatus, who would see in it a threat to their status, influence, and career prospects. This would therefore demand of the political leadership great clarity and unity of purpose, firmness and tact, in reallotting priorities and jurisdictions and redeploying personnel. One need scarcely mention the possible effects of power considerations in the leadership, in facilitating, obstructing, or distorting such changes.

Space has permitted mention of only a few of the major questions relating to the possible growth of self-regulating mechanisms in Soviet society. In particular, I have not discussed the likely effects of such developments on what were referred to earlier as the pseudo-democratic institutions of the party and the state. Enough has been said, however, to indicate their revolutionary implications for that complex dialectical tangle between the hypertrophied state and its concern for security and for innovation, which has been advanced here as basic to Russian politics since Muscovite times. These developments would at last begin to unravel the tangle, large areas of social life would be freed from subjection to the coercive order (the state), a constant self-generating renovation would render redundant the process of innovation-by-massive-but-delayed-response, the split within the Soviet elite would be healed, and relations with the West, freed of that love-hate involvement resulting from previous patterns of modernisation, would become more normal.

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RESISTANCE AND OPPOSITION

D. J. R. Scott

THE picture of its political life which the Soviet Union seeks to present to the world is one of quite incredible consensus, in which not only do all leaders, from the heads of the party and government to the members of village soviets, emerge from the taking of thought together without ever the need for a contested election, but complex problems in the determination of values and priorities equally readily suggest, and win support for, their own solutions. Differences of opinion are recognised, and since the death of Stalin have with increasing frequency been expressed in the press, where issues are raised for public discussion; but they are not expected to be pushed to the acrimonious conclusions familiar in other societies. In so far as this is not mere deception—and it is improbable that it is—it represents a sense of the way things ought to be, the way the prophets and founders thought they would be once the poison of the class conflict was cast out and the state, in its internal aspects at least, could begin to wither away.

Much of the explanation of the system as given by outside observers, while emphasising that the process of rational decision-making has proved infinitely more difficult than the founders assumed, suggests that a knocking together of heads may be an effective substitute for this meeting of minds, and that at least the securing of compliance may present little more difficulty than is reflected in the official picture, though the means differ.

In fact it is hardly necessary to prove that resistance and opposition exist, in the Soviet Union as elsewhere. If the question of who was to exercise power had not been a subject of dispute there need hardly have been the purges which poisoned Soviet life in the thirties and have not yet worked themselves out of the body politic. If peasant resistance had ended with the proclamation of the completion of full collectivisation, there can be little doubt, in view of the open statements of a succession of Soviet leaders at all levels, that private plots would long since have been discarded and that the collective farm members—whether or not transformed into state-farm workers—would now be living in agro-gorods. If the worker could be relied on to forget that he is also a consumer and to respond to the symbolic incentives offered him, much tedious debate and reversals of policy about the balance of the economy could have been avoided. Politics being the activity of finding courses of action which will pass for the will of the organisation to which they are applied, resistance or opposition—the obstacles through which they must pass—must always be a factor in the calculations of those who practise that activity as their craft.

If it appears otherwise it is perhaps because the associations of the words we use mislead us. Resistance, in an age still under the influence

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in its thought of the legends of the Second World War, suggests a military activity rather than a permanent fact of social life. There is probably no-one who would suggest that in the thinking of Soviet political leaders the possibility of armed resistance now plays any significant part, but it can safely be assumed that, there as elsewhere, courses of action are chosen because they seem likely to raise fewer human difficulties than some other methods of attaining similar ends, and some actions are avoided altogether because they seem likely to raise too many. Opposition, also, has, at least in British discourse, associations which can be misleading but also suggestive for further enquiry, since the word covers not only an activity but also an institution—an accepted way of doing things—productive under suitable circumstances of identifiable benefits at assessable costs.

To look for a direct Russian analogue of the idiosyncratic British convention of government by one of two rival firms of political contractors, with the other accorded special status and opportunity for advertising constantly and publicly its superior qualifications for providing a similar but preferable service, usually at somewhat keener prices, is one of the more obviously unprofitable enterprises of comparative politics. The British convention rests on generally accepted limitations of the scope of formal political action, on the general availability of the information on the basis of which decisions in the name of society fall to be taken, on the substantial equality of those in and those out of office in opportunity to process that information, and on a large measure of public indifference to the outcome of this process; it seems incompatible with socialist aspirations to remake all aspects of the life of man, and with the elevation of public decision to a level of technological complexity explicable only by and to an intricately balanced structure of specialised skills and equipment, the consequences of such decisions being presented as of life-and-death significance for major industrial organisations, the established way of life of whole communities, and the long-term balance of the national economy. Probably it is now little valued, even in its country of origin, by the practitioners of politics otherwise than as some substitute for the more complex forms of restraint on the power of authority found in systems which by tradition attribute a positive value to the individual sense of freedom. For Russia, as one of the first of the emergent countries in the full current acceptation of the term, political decisions had by the time of the revolution become a matter of passionate concern, even, on one question, among the otherwise inert peasantry. The necessary conditions of economic advance had at last been established, the means of their most effective exploitation were far from being agreed, and the increasingly obvious contrast between the existing order of things and the status and standards of living of the industrially developed powers had long been felt to demand action.

Almost all aspiring Russian reformers looked to a single model and source of inspiration, whether to the Russian village or to western Europe. Lenin, though distinctively and, to both contemporaries and

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successors, disconcertingly eclectic in his vision of how to bring about the Marxian socialist revolution in a society clearly lacking the prescribed preconditions, was even less disposed than most to concede that the location of power and the ends to which it might be used could be a matter of indifference. The harnessing of peasant discontent to the work of disruption, the assumption of what remained of the imperial apparatus of administration, and even the retreat to the NEP—whether or not he envisaged it as a long-term measure or as the temporary expedient which it proved to be—were not surrenders of power to rival claimants but temporary alliances requiring the unfettered control of the enlightened to ensure that they did not get out of hand.

The Bolsheviks' pre-revolutionary vision of the governmental system which it would fall to them to operate, if the inevitable should occur in their lifetime, was fragmentary and not very different from that of other revolutionary factions. The bias of their creed suggested—perhaps more forcibly than with other schools because of the assumptions which they brought from study of the conditions of the industrialised countries—that whatever machinery they might set up or inherit would be predominantly concerned with issues of economic development. But, given Lenin's views of the simplicity of the techniques of management, this had few specific administrative implications in their thinking. Any Russian revolutionary government was likely to inherit some formless apparatus of more-or-less spontaneous mass action, a major national disaster calling for remedy, and a considerable disharmony of objectives. The authoritarian traditions of the country made it a virtual certainty that the attempted solution would be a coercive one, and the tight military organisation of the Bolsheviks, and the means by which it had been achieved, offered a clear enough indication of how the coercion was likely to be exercised if the fashioning of the revolutionary order should fall to them.

IT was less clear before the event what instruments their party would be able to bend to its purpose. The development by the party itself of a complete professional administration of its own, both at the centre and at the several lower levels of administration, might perhaps have been foreseen, but the extent to which, in most fields of operative management, it would duplicate rather than replace or direct, the administrative and ministerial networks, probably could not. The further ramification of a system of checking and rechecking, from the first far-reaching, and the concentration of power in the hands of a purely coercive apparatus, traditionally Russian in aspect rather than traditionally Marxist, and responsible, in effect, to the secretary-general alone, would probably have caused concern among the founders. Certainly few of the men of 1917 had conceived of the extinction of such intra-party democracy as there was, whatever might happen outside its ranks. Seen from that viewpoint in time, it is unlikely that the dismantlement of much of this coercive apparatus since 1953 would seem to have gone

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anything like far enough, even though such of the veterans as have survived to receive rehabilitation and decorations in the post-Stalin period have no doubt been reasonably sincere in expressing their satisfaction with the changes since the passing of the tyrant at whose hands so many of them suffered so much. Whether Lenin, whose policies can be seen to have set the regime well on its way to Stalinism, would have approved of its continuing so long, must be a matter of conjecture and communist conscience-searching, but it seems likely that his authoritarian predilections would have inclined him to see reasons for it.

One of the more paradoxical changes of the Stalin period was the adoption of the traditional outward forms of parliamentarism by direct elections in territorial constituencies, though with pseudo-revolutionary features—covering party manipulation—in the form of nomination. Since this replaced election-up of legislatures from the local soviets, it removed the institutional basis for the claim—still made in the written constitution—that the Soviet Union is a state founded on Soviets. The post-Stalin period has seen no attempt to revert to original revolutionary practice in this respect, and there seems to be no advantage which might motivate such a reversion. On the other hand there seems to be no prospect of the forms of election being allowed to function as they do in countries of parliamentary tradition—as means of selection rather than of public affirmation of support. The resemblance to practice in non-communist countries extends rather to form than to function. Some publicity has lately been given to the fact of meetings of the standing committees of the houses of the legislatures, emphasising the supposed value of their work, though little concrete information on what in fact passes in their deliberations. Given reasonable specialisation of functions, access to information, and leave freely to criticise, these could be as effective a control on the government and its ministries as any likely to be devised, despite the marked disparity of standing between the members and the ministers. But although the post-Khrushchev restoration of the full structure of specialised industrial ministries has been accompanied by an increase in the number of committees of the Supreme Soviet, the signs are not very favourable; given the state's economic preoccupations it is unpromising that each house has only one committee for all industry—apart from the building and building-materials industries, commerce, and the service industries—and that legislative bills are still apparently the concern of a separate single committee in each house. Nor has any hint of disagreement emerged from such bodies, either into the press or into speeches in the subsequent meetings of the chambers to which they report.

Standing committees of local soviets, now relieved of much of the Stalinist ballast which rendered them inoperative, appear often to be reasonably effective in their allotted role. This, however, has little to do with policy-making; they are part of the extensive network of channels for promoting mass effort in purposes determined elsewhere; a device which may have usefully rounded off the corners of some impractic-

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able policies, but also has its black spots, from the committees of poor peasants mobilised against the early soviets, through those turned against the resisters to collectivisation, to the mass trials of alleged idlers under the Khrushchev regime. The numbers involved, though much quoted, are not a good index of popular contribution.

A very slight increase seems noticeable in the amount of muted criticism allowed in Supreme Soviet speeches, such as the hints of approval of Khrushchev's record after his fall; but this also would need to go much further before it could be considered really effective. It is more likely to become so, if at all, in the less highly prestige-charged atmosphere of local bodies than at the centre.

In general, it seems probable that rule in the Soviet Union will continue to be exercised by a web of interacting committees appointed by, or under the sanction of, a co-optative elite, and a large number of unconsolidated and imperfectly co-ordinated administrative services (including a rather higher proportion than in most other systems with primarily inspectorial functions, and with most of the others engaged in some degree of mutual supervision), similarly appointed, chiefly on the basis of specialist qualifications. The influence of the system's surviving image of itself as a system of government by public meeting of the uninstructed but spontaneously well disposed, with little need of detailed information or specialised skills, will probably continue to bias this selection slightly in the direction of a preference for skills in the public presentation of policies and performance, and, especially in the party elite itself, some weight will continue to be given to erudition in the largely otiose doctrines of Marxism and to the ability to explain and justify actions in its terms.

IT seems to be a reasonable charge against this system that it has not produced the self-critical flexibility required of a regime seeking in a period of rapidly changing technology to optimise the use of scarce resources, even when it is in a position substantially to ignore the wayward desires of the ultimate consumer. To what extent this deficiency is inherent in the formal structure it is perhaps impossible to say. It may well be that the pretensions of the socialist state, the claim to know what is good for a whole society of diversely natured and diversely circumstanced individuals (in the sense of being, by some test, what they want, or, by some moral criteria, what they ought to have), are beyond the capacity of any conceivable central decision-making apparatus; in the case of the Soviet Union the legacy of mutual suspicion and universal insincerity must also be allowed for. Soviet humbug, not necessarily more pervasive than that of other societies, but different, has been inimical to the evolution of the more obviously functional operations of an effective opposition.

Probably the most productive service of a group of potential office-holders outside the official machine is the fashioning of informed and original alternative policies. Originality is more likely to arise from such

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a source than from the established holders of power, burdened as they are by day-to-day assignments and limited by the loyalties and assumptions of habitual interaction. But this service is less to be looked for in a world of complex systems and integrated programmes than when the business of government consisted characteristically of the solution of discrete problems, and when consequently the cost of not having an opposition of traditional type was less. Even so, the solid crust of official thought is probably enriched by the activity of unofficial earthworms.

Apart from promoting ideas, a tolerated anti-establishment can make itself useful by the promotion of men, the development of leadership talent immediately available for high office, by channels which inhibit originality less than the normal career pattern of the system. An opposition of the British type can, of course, carry this service further by providing a complete alternative management, available both for office and as a standard against which the rising men of the incumbent faction can be measured. The more diverse opposition structure most characteristically found in the United States can similarly both evolve an alternative chief executive and designate, from among members of his faction with experience of high office, leading members for his administration. In the absence of such machinery, the Soviet Union faces a recurrent succession problem and a persistent tendency for incoming office-holders to establish their claim to the newcomer's presumption of innocence by personal recriminations against their predecessors.

Further, it is a function of organised opposition to give coherence and credibility to discontent. Even where no alternative policy can be formulated from outside the organisation, this activity can serve to confront the official holders of power with the dysfunctional aspects of some of their operations in the form of protest which they cannot easily dismiss as factious or insubstantial. The socialist state, as a firm dealing in everything from pepper to total defence systems and the exploration of outer space, is not very like the traditional liberal state, as preventer and adjuster of disputes among natural and corporate persons conceived of as ordinarily capable of furthering their own best interests and entitled to do so; nor is it, as a claimant to sovereignty within the limits of what it judges its subjects will stand, very like the traditional competitive firm, informed and constrained by the indications of the market and by the coercive power of a supposedly impartial arbiter between its claims and those of rivals. It is unlikely to be faced with the example of any other organisation so undeniably comparable to itself in circumstance and purpose that it is obliged to take it as a measure of its own performance. It has no external owners able to claim as of right a voice in its decision-making; as a rule it has little opportunity of extending the range of recruitment of its managerial talent, and though it can often call on advice from outside, it has little reason to suppose it disinterested. If it sometimes loses touch with the economic realities of the world within which it operates, it is hardly surprising.

Perhaps the function of an opposition most readily accepted by

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established authority, entitling it to raise a suitably deferential voice, and even to some encouragement in doing so, is to vent frustrations which otherwise might become dangerous. The difficulty is to find an opposition group which will content itself with this role and can so operate without losing its support.

THE Soviet Union looks to the outside world, as from the first it always has done, for many of the useful services of an opposition. The countries officially styled capitalist, and especially the United States, provide a stimulating threat and a justification for the siege regime, as well as offering a standard for the comparison of achievements. Khrushchev may have been unwise to be so free with target dates for surpassing various indices of American economic success, since in the short term for which he was playing this was a game he had little chance of winning; but in their more guarded way his predecessors and successors have been obliged to use the same index. As a source of ideas, whether in industrial design, methods of management, scientific discovery, or in less tangible fields, the practice of other countries has been studied with conspicuous thoroughness and imitated—usually with equally conspicuous lack of acknowledgement—in any respect judged consistent with the priorities set by authority and with the security of the regime. In this there has been no fundamental break in policy since the days of Lenin himself; with increased achievements the constraints of planning priorities have become less rigid, but the constraints of security seem in no material respect to have been relaxed.

The internal oppositions most overtly institutionalised have, by intention, been allowed least effective influence. The nationalities, granted recognition in one of the two equally empowered chambers of the Supreme Soviet, have gained thereby a standing reminder to authority that they are there, but otherwise nothing in a system in which no vote in either house—or, as far as available evidence runs, in any other publicly elected body at any level of the administrative system—has ever been less than unanimous and in entirely predictable accord with the line of the government and party. The shifts of population since the revolution have reduced many of the national communities to minorities in the territories bearing their names, and the domination throughout the Union of a party recognising no federal limitations on its unity has confined them everywhere to a culture 'national in form and socialist in content', with the party determining what is form and what content.

The trade unions, though consistently maintained as representatives of the special interest of labour, and latterly again recognised as having a place of importance in management, have throughout been so operated as to exclude them from expressing on any matter of importance any distinctive sectional view on behalf of the interest which they are supposed to represent. As representatives of the personnel management function, however, their officers do seem often to have operated as a

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useful partial opposition, not against the purposes of the regime as a whole but against the short-term and narrowly production-oriented actions of plant managers and their less august superiors; in this way they have probably served to direct higher authority to consideration of imbalance in its own thinking, even though they could not compel correction. Among their routine functions appears to have been pressure for keeping labour regulations in some accordance with the realities of practice.

The most fundamental clash of interests which the beneficiaries of the revolution found themselves committed to resolving, that between the peasant *narod* and the urban way of life, was of interest to them almost exclusively as a means of disrupting the previous order. The peasants were excluded as an institutionalised opposition, in the sense of a permanent foreordained loser in a continuing dialogue of government (and from the first it was evident that no opposition could hope for better terms) by their unwillingness to participate according to Bolshevik rules, and by the certainty that for a long time they would be in a majority and under temptation to draw inconvenient conclusions from that fact. Now that a large part of the peasant population has moved to the towns and the rulers have come to accept that certain material inducements, even to peasants, are productive in terms of output from the economy as a whole (with the ideologically suspect private plots providing a more diversified urban diet than the coercive management of agriculture seems able to yield), the width of the gap between the two nations is narrowed to what seem bridgeable proportions. Not only do the legislative bodies still have their traditional complements of senior shepherds and prize-winning milkmaids intermingled with party first secretaries and *ispolkom* chairmen—in token of acknowledgment that collective farm members are one of the two social classes recognised in the constitution, however inferior their status in practice—but for the first time the greatly enlarged collective farms are now able to raise an adequate complement of members and candidates in the party, itself greatly enlarged beyond elite proportions. However, there are few indications that rural areas are yet producing their own *apparatchiks* or that the cultivators are consulted on policy, even in agriculture, on which it is highly probable that many of them would still frequently give officially unacceptable advice. In large part this field of economic activity continues to be left to direct management by interference from party secretaries—whether notionally specialised, as under the Khrushchev dual-hierarchy interlude, or taking time off from the problems of industry. The demands long customary in the party press that collective farm chairmen should pay regard to the wishes of their members, in so far as consistent with fulfilment of the demands of the state, seem now to be more generally heeded—sometimes to the extent of incurring charges of collusion—but there is little evidence that those whose activities they manage have an effective voice in their selection.

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In so far as the voice of the rural population has been effective it has rather been outside the formally political channels and as part of the wider and more potent army of consumer-producers. While the production of capital goods retains its primacy in the thinking of the top management, it has evidently been accepted that some regard to what the public wants (even if at times it shows signs of a frivolity repugnant to more austere natures) is in order as a means of securing co-operation in public purposes (even if this means seeking to simulate some of the workings of non-communist economics).

A more credible opposition than the peasants is Russia's other traditional centre of disaffection, the intelligentsia. They, too, have an official standing in Russo-Marxist theory, and in the constitution, though from ideological scruples they are designated not, like the workers and collective farm members, as a class but as a class stratum. Terminologically, at least, Soviet rule has tamed the disruptive force of former times; the intelligentsia is no more than a sociological residual category for all who cannot, for one reason or another, conveniently be assigned to one of the approved classes. The superfluous man is superfluous no longer, and, whether as regularly employed technical or other specialist, clerk, or educator, or in the formally more autonomous position of the artist or litterateur, he has his place in the scheme of things and enjoys the guidance of the party in his contribution to the building of communism. In the last resort, as we have been reminded by the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, the regime will not hesitate to force him into line by stiff penalties. Latterly there has been a marked change observable in the journals of the specialised professional and other organisations, including those of the trade unions and the Komsomol. While continuing to echo the sentiments expressed in the leading organs of the general press, and commonly in the same words, they have begun to carry much more genuine controversy as well, often, it seems, stemming from consciously special viewpoints. In this some of the literary journals are among the boldest. Of course, the increased freedom to publicise ideas not fully received in official circles is used somewhat circumspectly by the standards of some other countries. Total suppression of the more objectively verifiable ideas of the scientist or technologist, at least, is now difficult and unlikely; appeal to an informed public can be expected to mobilise some influential support, and with the present wider dispersion of power at the top there are probably more points at which the lever of influence can be effectively applied. But if authority, in the last resort, will have none of it, the *intelligent* is still in no position to gang up to force it.

An element in society unknown to the constitution, or to Marxist theory as a distinct class or stratum, but in significant ways distinct from other professional groups and peculiarly difficult to prevent from ganging up, is the military. The Soviet regime has always been careful to ensure, by political penetration and indoctrination, that the esprit de corps of the services is not turned in the wrong direction. In the

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post-Stalin period this interest, like others, has shown a new-self-confidence and occasional traces of self-assertiveness, but it has been given no reason to suppose that it will be allowed to get away with very much.

Since the one clear and distinctive principle which the Soviet system of government has carried forward from Lenin to Brezhnev is the power of the central leadership of the party to take, and secure compliance with, the crucial decisions in all aspects of the national life—which in the terminology of any other system would be described as exercising the power of government—the possibility suggests itself that the body designated in the written constitution as the government—the Council of Ministers—and the corresponding bodies at the lower levels of administration, with the departmental apparatus answering to them, may be allowed to exercise some of the functions of an opposition. In general, the party seems to have been afraid to permit this development where it could prevent it, and its reservation to itself of all the crucial appointments and of a confirming voice in all others has made this power of prevention considerable. Chairmen and other principal officers of local soviet executive committees thus seem to form a single career service with the party *apparat*. The Union and republican governments, however, are a somewhat different matter. The preponderance, for most of the period since the revolution, of ministries concerned with the management of particular industries, and the indispensable requirement of specialised skills in the technology and economics of those industries, has regularly brought into membership of the formal government men whose careers have been cast in as narrow a field of activities as those of industrialists of the western world. Though party members, as most successful men in the Soviet Union become, they probably give their first loyalties to their industries. Some effect of this probably emerges in inter-industry conflicts on the setting of economic planning priorities, and the prospects of the Khrushchev regionalisation of the economy can hardly have been improved by the need to draw, for many of the most important *sovnarkhoz* chairmanships, on these men, who could be supposed to prefer a post in Moscow directing specialised concerns which they really understood, to a provincial town where they would direct mixed concerns in which they had specialised knowledge only of the principal activity. In fact, most of them soon found their way back to Moscow and the government as chairmen of co-ordinating State Committees.

The only special skill which the career service of the party can claim to possess—if the general management point of view cannot itself be so regarded—is the preservation and manipulation of the ideology, and this seems to have been so little regarded as to be a rather poor qualification for advancement even within the party itself; the recent tendency again to assert the importance of ideology perhaps indicates the apparatus's awareness of its weakness in this respect, but seems unlikely to make much impression on those whose specialised skills produce

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more tangible results and who, having themselves the basic qualification of party membership, can reasonably claim to be in a better position to do the party official's job than he to do theirs. Whatever the position at the centre, there are clear indications that the manager of a large plant does not often go in much awe of the local party boss.

To most who have endured through the Stalin years of purgatory, the resilience of the society built by the Bolsheviks to their Marxist plans on their recalcitrant Russian site must seem impressive. To them, as to those of socialist disposition elsewhere, and especially to the more recently emergent countries, it must suggest that by command and determination, even without a regeneration of man, a significantly higher standard of living can still be delivered and an even more considerable figure cut in the world. Few perhaps are conscious of the lack of safeguards in the system for the evolution of more rational leadership in the future, or for its provision with better information. Those who are may well, and with reason, question whether, given their commitment to socialist purposes, with its probably inherent disposition to give less weight to individual aspirations towards liberty than to attaining a materially more abundant life, any other country's experience would be of much use to them. Yet it might be suggested that, given the limitations of man's knowledge and the complexity of the events he seeks to control, some of the forms and responsibilities of freedom might usefully be accepted as means to material abundance itself. Human resistance will in any case limit and bias action, but unless some care is taken to give it due regard, it may act too unpredictably and too late.

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FIFTY YEARS OF SOVIET EDUCATION

Jeremy R. Azrael

AMONG the many successes that Soviet spokesmen will celebrate in their speeches and articles in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, educational achievements will occupy a prominent place. Whether the regime should—or does—view these achievements as an unmixed blessing is problematic, but the educational system is obviously a source of considerable pride; it has transformed an illiterate and unschooled country into a nation standing near the top of most standard international educational rankings. If many of the results are still in doubt, the process itself is unmistakable, and there is no question that it deserves detailed and systematic study.

The tsarist educational heritage ranks high in the complex of factors that produced the revolution. To start with, the lag in educational development was clearly responsible for many of the barriers that impeded not only full understanding but even basic comprehension among the diverse ethnic groups, economic classes, and social strata that composed Russian society, and these uncommonly wide gaps in the social structure, in turn, were almost certainly a prerequisite for the Bolshevik seizure of power. At the same time, conscious resentment of these gaps and some ability to communicate across them were equally essential, and these factors were largely dependent on the educational *progress* which had characterised the last decades of tsarist rule. That this progress had not been rapid enough to create an integrated society with widely shared goals and norms was at the heart of the tragedy of Russian constitutional democracy. Emergent constitutionalism was a reality, but it lacked a stable social base of the sort that might have enabled it to weather the severe crises that beset Russia in 1917. Such an outcome was improbable under the best of circumstances; given the explosive combination of a highly fragmented society and a population with enough education to be readily available for political mass mobilisation, violent revolution was almost sure to follow military defeat and economic collapse.

However one evaluates Lenin's surprising assertion that the Bolshevik's motto in embarking on the political revolution was the Napoleonic *on s'engage et puis on voit*, there is no doubt about the applicability of this motto to the 'cultural revolution'. There is no warrant for the claims of latter-day Soviet historians that the works of Marx and Engels and the pre-revolutionary writings of Lenin provide a systematic theory of socialist education. The patristic literature does indicate that a socialist education should be free, secular, obligatory, coeducational, and accessible to all, and that in a socialist society

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education cannot and should not be divorced from politics; and it should provide students with instruction in their native languages; that it should be combined with productive labour; and that it should engender sentiments of collective solidarity. Finally, it prescribes that the goal of socialist education is the creation of fully and harmoniously developed individuals, omnicompetent, new, socialist men. However, few, if any, of these dicta are spelled out in any detail, let alone combined into a sophisticated educational strategy. Educational priorities are left quite vague, and there is almost no discussion of the educational implications of such broader goals as social and economic equality, political control and mobilisation, industrial development, national integration, or personal self-realisation. Accordingly, as a source of operational guidance to the men charged with designing the first socialist educational system, the utility of the patristic writings was distinctly limited. The concrete battle plans for what was quickly designated ' the third front ' had to be drawn up on the spot.

IN the absence of a ready-made blueprint for educational development, the new Soviet regime was unusually receptive to all sorts of experimental programmes, and the case for innovation was vigorously pressed by a number of ' progressive ' pedagogues who suddenly found themselves catapulted into positions of authority. In consequence, early Soviet educational policy incorporated many of the liberal and democratic principles that distinguished the current advanced pedagogy.

In the sphere of organisation and administration, the progressive spirit found expression in the extensive decentralisation that was to be found at all levels of the Soviet school system during the first decade of its existence. In the first place, each Soviet republic was allowed to establish its own ministry of education, and these separate ministries pursued quite divergent policies. Moreover, up to 1927–28, the curricula and programmes devised by the republican ministries had a purely advisory character, and the proferred advice was often rejected, with the result that there were major variations in the programmes adopted by the educational authorities in different provinces and regions within the same republic. And, finally, the entire period was characterised by the institutionalisation of collegial management and student self-government within the schools themselves.

Not all these measures reflected official commitment to the liberal and democratic tenets of progressive pedagogy. In some cases, decentralisation had distinctly illiberal overtones; and even where such overtones were absent, decentralisation was often nothing more than a temporary expedient, rooted in the regime's inability to meet the popular demand for education from its own resources. Important as these qualifications are, however, they do not justify the conclusions of those western scholars who contend that the Bolshevik regime never sanctioned any real devolution of educational authority. Decentralisation

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was quite extensive in practice and was often pursued as a matter of principle.

It is an index of the Bolsheviks' strong commitment to mass education that the new regime immediately undertook to satisfy the pent-up demand for schooling. This proved unexpectedly arduous, however, and the initial consolidation of Bolshevik power was in fact accompanied by a reduction in school enrolments and the closing of many newly-opened schools. Revolutionary enthusiasm and spontaneous public action were forced to yield to harsh economic reality, and it was only after a three or four year breathing space that the regime was again able to confront the task of mass education. Even then, its progress was relatively slow—slower, in any event, than is indicated by official statistics which show that there were almost 10,000,000 children in primary school in 1927 as against 7,000,000 in 1914; that secondary enrolments were up from 660,000 to over 1,000,000; and that the number of students in institutions of higher education had climbed from 125,000 to 160,000. These figures are based on formal registration rather than actual attendance, and contemporary sources indicate that the gap between the two was often very wide. But, given the heritage of a backward country ravished by over six years of warfare, the remarkable thing is perhaps how rapidly school enrolments increased. Certainly, there is no reason to denigrate what was actually accomplished or to doubt the sincerity of the commitment that lay behind it.

If the post-revolutionary regime had only limited success in introducing mass education, its success in insuring the equal distribution of what educational opportunities were in fact available was not significantly greater. To start with, there continued to be wide educational disparities between the sexes. In the second place, while there was a reduction in the marked educational advantages of the Russians relative to the other Slav nationalities, the Ukrainians and White Russians continued to lag behind their Great Russian brethren, and there were gross inequalities between these nationalities and the rest. Thus, to take the polyglot RSFSR as an example, whereas there were nine university and eight technicum students per 1,000 inhabitants in the republic at large in 1929, the corresponding figures for the republic's minority nationalities were 0·4 and 0·45.

A third major source of inequality in Soviet education was the rural-urban gap, which appears to have been almost as wide at the end of the first post-revolutionary decade as it had been under the *ancien régime*. Even in 1928, rural primary schools could not provide places for 35 per cent of the children in the relevant age group, whereas in most urban areas places were at least potentially available for all. Moreover, only 28 per cent of those children who entered rural primary schools were able to complete the normal four-year course, whereas the corresponding figure in the cities was 72 per cent. As for secondary

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education, or even post-primary vocational education, it was virtually unavailable in the countryside, with the result that only 2 per cent of the children between twelve and sixteen were in school in rural areas as against 30 per cent in the cities. In sum, if the rural child was somewhat more likely to attend school in 1927–29 than before the revolution, he was still in a greatly disadvantaged position in comparison with his urban counterpart.

If the educational prospects of all rural children were bleak, those of the poorer peasants were downright black; and what was true in the countryside in this regard was only slightly less true in the cities: educational opportunity was closely correlated with socio-economic status, thereby adding yet another dimension to the picture of persistent educational inequality. In White Russia, only 15 per cent of the children of poor peasants who entered the first grade managed to complete the fourth grade, as against 40 per cent of the children of middle peasants and 100 per cent of the peasant children from well-provided homes. In the cities, things were not quite so bad. Most lower-class children were at least able to attend school, and many were able to complete their primary education. However, a number of factors militated against their going further, including the psychological and intellectual effects of cultural deprivation in the home, the poor quality of the primary schools in the lower-class districts, and the inability of working-class families to defer potential income or to meet the tuition payments that applied in most urban secondary schools. As a result of these and other deterrents, only one in six children of proletarian origin could expect to get any appreciable general education beyond the fourth grade, and only one in seventy was likely to get as far as grade eight.

These figures stand in sharp contrast to those for the children of officials, half of whom continued their education beyond the primary level, and one in ten of whom entered the eighth grade. Moreover, the drop-out rate among workers' children who did get as far as the eighth grade was extremely high. In consequence, the complete secondary schools were almost exclusively the preserve of non-proletarian elements; the children of workers were at best only 15 or 16 per cent of the total student body.

THE most far-reaching changes that occurred during the first decade of Soviet education were those that gave the curriculum a political and vocational character, of which the latter probably had the more profound impact. This is ironic, for one of the first decrees of the Russian ministry had called for the replacement of the few existing vocational training programmes by programmes of general polytechnical education—to include definite vocational components but far more comprehensive in scope. From the outset, however, the Ukrainian

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and White Russian ministries placed vocational training at the centre of their educational mission, even going to the extreme of transforming many existing secondary schools into narrowly specialised technicums designed to produce low- and middle-level technicians. In the RSFSR pressure from parents who wanted their children to learn a trade compelled the speedy revocation of the ban on vocational training, while a growing recognition of the 'logic' of economic recovery and growth—a logic forcefully impressed upon the educational authorities by trade union officials and economic executives—led to the rapid expansion of a network of vocational schools and to the introduction of more and more vocational components into the ordinary school curriculum. Until 1930, the Russian Republic authorities continued to condemn this trend in principle, and in practice its impact was everywhere limited by lack of facilities and staff, but the trend was unmistakable and its emergence constitutes a central strand in early Soviet educational development.

In contrast to the process of vocationalisation, the politicalisation of the curriculum which followed the revolution was clearly anticipated in Bolshevik educational doctrine. The Bolsheviks had always viewed education as a political instrument, and once they seized power they were determined to bend this instrument to their own purposes. Accordingly, 'politically retrograde' subjects such as church history, Greek, and Latin were quickly dropped from the authorised curriculum; textbooks that the regime considered ideologically inimical were to be withdrawn from circulation; and new programmes in the humanities and social sciences were elaborated, providing for the replacement of national history by local history and the history of the class struggle, for the analysis of literature from the point of view of its social content, for the study of dialectical materialism, etc. While recognising the significance of these measures, however, it is important to avoid exaggeration.

In the first place, it is clear that there was the usual gap between theory and execution. Official reports on actual educational practice were full of complaints that the schools continued to rely on old texts and programmes, that teachers were unfamiliar with even the rudiments of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, and that there was widespread local resistance to transforming social science training into a political campaign. In addition, the policy itself embodied certain restraints. The official line as such held that propaganda and agitation should be differentiated from education, which had to be political, to be sure, but involved the formation of a general communist world view rather than the explicit inculcation of party loyalty and programmatic commitment.

Beginning in the late 1920s, the progressive promise of early Soviet education was steadily retracted and experimentation was vigorously suppressed. Decentralisation now became purely a matter

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of administrative convenience. The equalisation of educational opportunity ceased to be a paramount objective. Talk of the incompatibility of narrow vocational training with communist goals stopped, and all efforts to differentiate between communist education and crude political indoctrination were condemned. Stalin was now in power, and organisational monolithism, self-conscious elitism, intense specialisation, and all-embracing 'party-mindedness' became the order of the day in both theory and practice. In sum, education was now assigned a purely instrumental value, and the school system, like every other major institution in Soviet society, was mobilised to serve the goals of rapid industrialisation and political consolidation, the twin goals of the Stalin era.

Organisationally, the *leit-motif* of the Stalin era in education, as elsewhere, was concentration and centralisation. The ensuing changes were most evident in higher education, where control of the most important institutions (*vuzes*) was officially transferred from the republics to the centre. This process began in 1928–29, when almost all technical *vuzes* (or *vtuzes*) were subordinated directly to the Supreme Council of the National Economy or other appropriate all-union economic agencies; it was rapidly accelerated in the early and middle 1930s, when 'programmatic-methodological leadership' of first the *vtuzes* (from 1932) and then all *vuzes* (from 1936) was vested in a centralised State Committee on Higher Education; and it culminated in 1946 with the creation of a new union-republic Ministry of Higher Education.

In general secondary and primary education, there was no such formal concentration of authority, but in fact centralisation proceeded apace. A series of Central Committee decrees in the early 1930s led to the elimination of almost all inter-republic differences in school structure and organisation, and there was a growing tendency for the various republican ministries to adopt the curricula and programme of the Russian Republic virtually intact. In consequence, with the important exception of the predominant language of instruction and a few additional minor exceptions, the Stalin era witnessed the emergence of an all-union school system in everything but name.

Insofar as the individual schools (or higher institutions) did retain any discretionary authority, this was now vested almost entirely in the hands of the director (or rector) and exercised according to the principle of one-man-management. The very idea of faculty and/or student self-government was denounced, and staff and pupils were told that their duty was to obey—the administration in the case of teachers, and teachers in the case of students. Pioneer and Komsomol organisations were ordered to devote themselves primarily to the enforcement of academic discipline, and the student *kollektiv* was transformed into a para-military body, the purpose of which was to insure that initiative was directed into authorised channels, that 'individualism'

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was ruthlessly suppressed, and that students were mobilised for the enthusiastic overfulfilment of centrally assigned tasks.

THE first decade of the Stalin era witnessed an extremely rapid growth in school enrolments. While the regime did not realise its goal of universal primary education by 1932, it did overcome most of the shortfall by 1935, and, by 1939, the only areas in which there was still a significant number of children of primary school age who did not attend classes were the rural regions of Central Asia. Primary enrolments climbed from ten or eleven million (1929) to 21,000,000 (1939); the number of students in grades five to seven rose from 1,700,000 to almost 9,000,000, roughly 65 per cent of all children between the ages of 12 and 14; in the senior secondary grades (8 to 10), enrolments jumped from 300,000 to approximately 1,400,000, or roughly 15 per cent of young people between 15 and 17 years of age. Higher education, too, underwent a rapid expansion, with enrolments more than doubling between 1929 and 1932, when they reached 500,000, rising to 620,000 by 1939.

This was an impressive rate of growth by any standards. Although actual accomplishments continued to lag far behind official targets, the accomplishments were real, and the prospects for continued rapid progress seemed bright. Before these prospects could be realised, however, war intervened, bringing the school system to a virtual standstill for over a year, forcing a drastic curtailment of educational programmes throughout its duration, and confronting the regime with a mammoth task of educational reconstruction in 1945. In consequence, it was only in 1950 that the educational system again attained the coverage that it had reached in 1939.

The nineteenth party congress in 1952 could do little more than reiterate the educational targets set by the eighteenth congress in 1939. The regime was now in a much better position to realise these targets, and the next years in fact witnessed some dramatic progress, but the situation on the eve of Stalin's death still left much to be desired. That the preceding twelve years had seen so limited an expansion of the school system was due primarily to the war and not to any failure of educational policy or purpose, but the lost years were nonetheless lost, and it remained true that after 35 years of Soviet power the graduating classes of the secondary schools included only 8 to 10 per cent of those who had entered the first grade ten years before. If this was a presentable figure by European standards, it fell far short of its American counterpart, and it did not begin to approximate the long-standing Marxist-Leninist goal of a ten- to twelve-year general education for all.

By the later years of the Stalin era, graduation from a complete secondary school had become both a near guarantee of and a virtual prerequisite for entry into an institution of higher education, and higher

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education, in turn, had increasingly become a prerequisite for elite recruitment. While lesser educational attainments could still bring substantial upward mobility below the elite level, from the mid-1930s on, few of those who were unable to secure a complete secondary and higher education could hope to become 'commanders' on one or another of the various 'fronts' of Soviet life.

This makes it the more frustrating that we know so little about the composition and character of the relevant student bodies. There is no doubt, however, that secondary school graduates continued to come disproportionately from the ranks of the 'bourgeoisie', albeit the major source was now the 'state bourgeoisie' of the party and governmental bureaucracy. By the late 1930s, 45 per cent of all *vuz* students confessed to 'official' or other non-proletarian origins, and, by the end of the Stalin era, 60 to 70 per cent of the students in the best *vuzes*, where the competition for places was intense, came from 'new class' homes. Quite apart from their greater ability to bring improper influence and pressure to bear, young people from well-to-do families regularly fared better than their lower-class compeers on school tests and university entrance examinations. And from 1935 on, admissions policy relied almost exclusively on academic criteria, the previous policy of discounting the substandard grades of proletarian students having been discarded as a sign of 'petty-bourgeois equality-mongering.'

Of the lower-class children who did manage to get a secondary and higher education, almost all were from urban areas. While most workers' children could look forward to no more than seven years of education, those who did complete the seventh grade could at least hope to find a ten-year school in reasonable proximity, and the better-paid workers could usually afford to pay the tuition fees that students in grades 8 to 10 were required to pay from 1941 on. These fees, which ranged up to 200 rubles per year, reflected a decision by the regime to keep a fairly low ceiling on mass general education, but they could be waived in the case of particularly talented students and they did not put an absolutely impossible burden on the family budgets of the skilled urban proletariat. Moreover, even those working-class children who had to stop their general education at the seventh grade could frequently hope to secure places in the technicums which proliferated throughout the Stalin era, and a small but significant proportion of each entering class of the higher schools was reserved for technicum graduates with outstanding records.

The peasant-collective farmer was nowhere near so fortunate. Even in the later years of the Stalin era, it is doubtful that the majority of peasant children got so far as the seventh grade, while in the few instances where ten-year education was otherwise accessible, it was a rare peasant who could meet the obligatory fees. In consequence, the small rural contingent in the upper ranks of the educational hierarchy was far more 'bourgeois' than its urban counterpart. It

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consisted almost entirely of the offspring of collective farm chairmen, MTS directors, party secretaries, and other members of the rural 'toiling intelligentsia' and bureaucratic elite.

THE Stalin regime shared none of the inhibitions of the early Bolshevik regime regarding either narrow vocational specialisation or narrowly partisan political indoctrination. So far as the balance between vocational training and general education was concerned, the only question was one of expediency, and, where economic interests seemed to dictate narrow specialisation, no ideological scruples were allowed to stand in the way. Accordingly, when the turn to rapid industrialisation raised the spectre of an acute 'cadres famine', the regime unhesitatingly 'vocationalised' all upper level education, transforming almost all complete secondary schools into technicums and the vast majority of universities and institutes into two or three year professional schools, designed to serve the immediate personnel needs of particular economic agencies. Likewise, when certain branches of industry and transport were unable to attract sufficient semi-skilled manpower, the regime promptly introduced the Labour Draft, with its entirely vocational, short-course Labour Reserve schools. By the same token, however, the regime was prepared to abolish vocational training altogether when that seemed expedient. Thus, once it became apparent that the shop courses and job-training programmes provided in the regular schools did not justify their cost, the relevant facilities were quickly shut down, even though the hallowed Marxist-Leninist principle of polytechnical education made such a step extremely difficult to justify in ideological terms. Consequently, from the mid-1930s on, the curriculum of the regular school system acquired an exclusively academic character, with vocational preparation concentrated in the network of labour reserve schools and in the system of specialised secondary education.

In effect, the regime created two parallel school systems, each exemplifying one of the two extremes that Marxist-Leninist educational doctrine had rejected, and the two together making a mockery of the long-standing Bolshevik commitment to the principle of a unified school. To be sure, at the apex of the regular school system, the universities and institutes did remain specialised, but even they became progressively more 'divorced from life', and matriculating students, with the exception of the few from technicums, knew almost nothing of production or even of applied science and technology. The regime had decided not only that labour training in regular schools did not pay, but also that the leading members of the new Soviet intelligentsia should turn to specialisation only after completing an entirely non-specialised, non-practical novitiate. Only in this way, it was felt, would the danger of emergent technocracy be warded off and the continuation of party dominance, the dominance of 'red' over 'expert',

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be assured. To this end, however, it was not enough merely to avoid premature professionalisation; it was also necessary to make the entire regular educational process an exercise in the inculcation of militant 'Soviet patriotism' and 'party spirit'.

In the primary grades a particularly intensive effort was made to establish full identity between political community (nation), regime (party), and government (state system and ruling authorities), and to channel commitment from one to another level of the political system without discrimination or differentiation. The earliest initiation into the cult of Stalin was considered an especially useful means of cementing this identification, since experience was alleged to show that 'children progress most easily to the feeling of love for their motherland and their state through a feeling of love for the leader of the Soviet people'. As one Soviet educator subsequently put it,

> From the very first day at school . . . children were brought up in the spirit of genuflection to the personality of J. V. Stalin. The idea was daily inculcated into school children that their happy childhood had been created . . . by him and precisely he had given them the right to education. All the victories gained by the Soviet people both in the struggle against enemies and in creative work were explained . . . by his genius and wisdom . . .

Nor was the extent of these victories underestimated. The earliest primers were designed to demonstrate that under the leadership of Comrade Stalin 'the Soviet people everywhere . . . in all spheres march in the forefront of other nations and have created values which are unequalled anywhere in the world'. Certainly they were unequalled in the capitalist world, which teachers were instructed to describe in such a way that students would know 'not only with their minds but with their hearts that capitalism is hunger, unemployment, and eternal fear of tomorrow'. It was expected that an emotionally charged juxtaposition of the glories of Soviet life and the horrors of life elsewhere would inspire students with a sense of indebtedness to their own society and a feeling that they were obliged to repay its beneficence with unstinting service of the sort exemplified in the hagiographic life histories of the multitudinous 'positive heroes' whose biographies filled the pages of every textbook. The watchwords of this service, in turn, were faith in Comrade Stalin and vigilance against his enemies, who were invariably depicted in the most repulsive terms. In short, the dichotomous image of the world was complemented by a dichotomous image of human nature, and every effort was made to inculcate a radical intolerance of ambiguity. Rigorous discipline and 'personal self-sacrifice with the aim of bringing victory to the fatherland' were the highest virtues; the greatest happiness was a valorous death under Stalin's banner.

At the secondary level, the indoctrination message was essentially the same. The presentation became more sophisticated, however, and

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a wider range of techniques and subject-matter was brought to bear. Although the major emphasis continued to be placed on Russian national history, more time was now devoted to the study of party history and to the explication of the provisions of the Great Stalin Constitution and the rights and duties of citizens of the world's 'most democratic state'. More effort was expended during these years on cultivating a 'class point of view' and training students to unmask and expose the class essence of 'alien' principles and ideas. But what was sought was total loyalty to the party and the regime rather than ideological finesse. There was an implicit recognition that at this stage over-exposure to the refinements of communist theory could produce confusion by providing an independent standard by which to judge official policy.

It was only in institutions of higher education that the study of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist theory was formally introduced. It was only now that the regime could hope that it had achieved its goal of educating students who had 'no interests opposed to the collective interests' and training young people who both had initiative and were prepared to restrict its exercise to the purely instrumental level, where it would find expression as 'an independent search for the best way to fulfil a command'. All *vuz* students were required to take several courses in dialectical and historical materialism and other related subjects, often giving them as much as one-third of their classroom time. These courses, it was hoped, would consolidate the Marxist-Leninist world view of that segment of Soviet youth which would provide the elite cadres of the future, ensuring that these cadres would approach their impending assignments from a party point of view.

THERE is little doubt that Stalin was considering some major changes in educational policy on the eve of his death. Emergent demographic and economic pressures made such changes almost mandatory, and there was good reason for dissatisfaction with established procedures on political grounds as well. The educational system had become as rigid and inflexible as most other institutions, and virtually all the problems that beset the regime during the last years of Stalin's life testified to the need for educational reform. This was acknowledged in the pedagogical press with growing frequency, and received official recognition at the nineteenth party congress. However, the relevant congress resolutions, while distinctly innovatory in tone, were largely confined to generalities, and before the details could be filled in, Stalin died, thereby catapulting not only the educational system but all of Soviet society into a new stage of development.

Organisationally, the first decade after Stalin's death was characterised by a trend towards administrative decentralisation. The Ministry of Higher Education was transformed from an all-union to a union-republic ministry—a process that began in 1955 and was completed in

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1960, by which time separate ministries had been established in all the republics except the RSFSR. While Moscow's role in the sphere of higher education continued to go well beyond the overall planning and coordination functions to which it was formally restricted, the national republics do appear to have acquired considerably more control over curriculum development, academic appointments, and student admissions policy.

A similar devolution of control occurred in the sphere of general secondary and primary education. The non-Russian republics ceased to model their every action on Russian practice, and greater allowance was made for local variations within the different republics. There was also a marked effort to mitigate the authoritarian character of administration-staff and faculty-student relationships within the school. Though these changes too were often more apparent than real, and usually concerned tangentials rather than essentials, their cumulative impact was substantial, and the net result was considerably greater administrative flexibility at all levels of the system.

Although it was alleged at the twentieth party congress that universal 7-year education had become a reality by 1955–56, this announcement was clearly premature. Two years later Khrushchev spoke of a 20 per cent drop-out rate between grades 1 and 7, and even today a significant proportion of Soviet children leave school without completing the 7th grade. Nevertheless, the first decade after Stalin's death was characterised by a rapid spread of incomplete secondary education in the previously unserviced rural backwaters of the country, and by the end of the period such education was in fact almost universally available. Moreover, there was a simultaneous growth in the proportion of students who managed to finish complete secondary school. Thus in Novisibirsk, which was probably not a-typical of urban Russia as a whole, 20 per cent of those who entered the first grade in 1953 completed their secondary education, as against 13 per cent in 1947. However, it is probable that a considerable part of this growth was accomplished by means of a rapid expansion of evening and correspondence education, the quality of which was notoriously low. And what was true of the complete secondary schools was even more true of the *vuzes*. Daytime enrolments were held constant until 1961 and then expanded only very slightly, with the result that large numbers of secondary school graduates were forced to abandon all thought of higher education or else to enrol in extension courses while holding regular jobs.

Among the factors responsible for the reluctance to expand full-time higher education and to lift the ceiling on secondary enrolments, the most important was undoubtedly the acute labour shortage following the war, and it was a desire to compensate for these population losses which was primarily responsible for the radical reorganisation of the school system that Khrushchev introduced in 1958. In particular, this goes far to explain his insistence that almost all secondary school

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graduates work for at least two years before going on to higher education. Nor is there any doubt that this requirement was widely enforced albeit there were more exceptions than Khrushchev might have liked. Thus, there is no reason to question the official figures which indicate that the percentage of matriculating students with production experience rose from 10 in 1950 to 50 in 1961, and reached 70 by 1964. If most *vuz* entrants had some first-hand acquaintance with the world of common labour, however, a disproportionate number continued to come from the privileged strata of Soviet society.

If the 'non-official' contingent in institutions of higher education remained small, the contingent of students from rank-and-file homes in rural areas does not seem to have increased at all. Whereas 46 per cent of the graduates of urban secondary schools went on to higher education in Novosibirsk province in the mid-1960s, in rural areas the corresponding figure was only 28, and of these less than half were of peasant origin. The poor quality of education in the countryside put even the best graduates of rural secondary schools at a strong competitive disadvantage, and it was still a rare peasant who managed to complete the 10th or 11th grade. While complete secondary schools were more accessible to the rural population than ever before, they were still far from universal and almost all their graduates continued to come from the ranks of the 'rural intelligentsia', with the average peasant child confined to 7 or 8 years of education at best and often to considerably less.

THE two most fundamental changes in the area of curriculum and method during the first post-Stalin decade were destalinisation and the rehabilitation of vocational training in the regular schools. In 1952, the nineteenth congress had called on the educational authorities to return to the Leninist principle of polytechnical education, and it seems clear that what was actually envisaged was the reintroduction of labour training programmes to prepare students for the jobs that they would be required to take in increasing numbers as the manpower deficit caused by the war became more acute. However, it was only after Stalin's death that anything was done to implement this decision. In 1954–55 manual work was reintroduced in the primary grades; in 1955–56 the study of production was required of all students in the senior secondary grades; and in 1956–57 the polytechnicalisation of the curriculum became a major campaign, which culminated in the massive curricular changes introduced in 1958. Ten per cent of the primary school programme was given over to manual labour, while students in the incomplete secondary grades were required to devote 5 per cent of their study time to production training, and senior secondary pupils were expected to spend one-third of their time in actual production practice and to pass a qualifying examination as a skilled worker by the time they graduated. Moreover, *vuz* students too were supposed

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to spend a considerable amount of their time working in production, and their professional training programmes were revised to give them a much more pragmatic cast. In practice, these changes proved unexpectedly difficult to operate, but the regime persisted, and by 1964 most secondary schools had instituted apprenticeship training, and the entire educational system was caught up in a surging wave of vocationalism.

The principal victims of the campaign to strengthen the ties of the school with production were history and literature, both of which were now allotted considerably less time in the general curriculum. Even more striking than the reduction in the number of hours devoted to these subjects, however, was the change in their content, for they were the subjects most directly affected by the process of destalinisation. The denunciation of the 'cult of personality' required a massive revision of virtually all texts and programmes in the social sciences and humanities, and the subsequent period found the regime engaged in a frantic effort to find new themes and new formulas for the political socialisation and resocialisation of the younger generations. This effort took two principal forms: Marxist-Leninist revivalism, and concentration on contemporary events and future prospects at the expense of the Stalinist past. The cult of Lenin was elevated to unprecedented heights, and students were ceaselessly reminded of the romance of the October Revolution and of the purity and universality of the doctrine that had inspired the founding fathers of the Soviet state. At the same time, inordinately heavy stress was placed on the tasks and problems on the regime's current agenda, and on the relationship between these tasks and the imminent realisation of full-fledged communism. This prospect, in turn, was treated as conclusive vindication of Marxist-Leninist theory, thus rendering the 'deviations' of the Stalin period irrelevant from a historico-ideological point of view. In so far as there was continuity, it was provided by the party organisations at the grass roots and by the masses, both of which were alleged to have remained essentially uncorrupted by Stalinism. But the main effort was to avoid discussions of the Stalin era wherever possible. In the new indoctrinational course introduced into the secondary school curriculum in 1960 and 1961, social studies or the foundations of political knowledge, Stalinist theory and practice were passed over in almost total silence, and it was this and other new courses such as Marxist-Leninist ethics, Marxist-Leninist aesthetics, and scientific atheism, which were now assigned the brunt of the indoctrinational burden. That so much of this burden was placed on such untested supports is a graphic index of the crisis of legitimacy that confronted Stalin's heirs.

THE Brezhnev-Kosygin regime has a good case when it depicts Khrushchev's educational reforms as prime examples of 'subjectivism' and 'hare-brained scheming'. In pressing ahead with his

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reform plans Khrushchev went against the weight of expert opinion, and this time the experts proved right. As they predicted, the apprenticeship training programmes in the schools failed to produce a significant number of skilled workers, while the requirement that most secondary school graduates work for two years led to a precipitous decline in the quality of higher education. It became increasingly obvious that the only sensible course was retreat. Khrushchev had too much at stake to retreat, but it was no surprise when his successors decided to eliminate the extra, eleventh, year that Khrushchev had added to the school programme, to abolish production practice in the secondary schools, and to rescind the policy of favouring 'workers from production' in *vuz* admissions. These decisions did not, however, prefigure a return to the *status quo ante*. While rehabilitating many traditional forms and procedures, the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime has itself made a number of new departures.

Organisationally, the innovations include both decentralising and centralising measures. For example, the Baltic republics have been allowed to retain their 11-year schools, the educational authorities in Leningrad and several other cities may enrol large numbers of six-year-olds in the first grade, rectors and institute directors have been granted important new rights, and discussion of ways and means to enhance the authority of faculty committees in the conduct of academic affairs has been encouraged. On the other hand, for the first time in Soviet history, the regime has created a centralised Ministry of Education and established an all-union Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. The contradiction between these approaches is less than appears, however, for the new, centralised agencies are not supposed to enforce strict uniformity. Their task is rather to ensure the more effective coordination of educational policy and to speed the dissemination of advanced pedagogical practice. In particular, the regime is anxious to facilitate the rapid introduction of classroom television, programmed teaching, and similar techniques, in the belief that they can yield substantial improvements in the quality of Soviet education, especially in rural areas, with their chronic lack of qualified teachers and adequate equipment. Since there is a great deal of inertia in the established educational bureaucracy, no large-scale change is possible without pressure from above, and it is the intended function of the new Ministry to exert such pressure and thereby ensure both the effective implementation of the programmes devised by the new Academy and the free development of promising local experiments.

The Brezhnev-Kosygin regime has also sponsored some major curricular innovations. Most notably, it has decided to permit senior secondary students to concentrate in one of three areas—the humanities, the physical and mathematical sciences, or chemistry and biology. Some experiments along these lines were begun under Khrushchev, but now the entire secondary curriculum (from grade 9) is being reorganised into

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differentiated programmes built around a common core. This, it is felt, will enable those students who do not go on to higher education—and they will constitute a large and growing percentage of secondary school graduates—to become at least passably conversant with one area of knowledge instead of being 'universal ignoramuses', inadequately trained in everything. Even more important, it is hoped that the opportunity to concentrate will enable the best students to embark on their specialised training in institutions of higher education with a firmer grounding in the most relevant basic sciences. Instead of being 'universal dilettantes', they will be full-fledged pre-professionals, ready for a far broader and deeper professional education than has heretofore been possible. And, if all goes according to plan, the *vuzes* will soon be in a position to provide such education, for their own programmes are now being revised to make them more appropriate to the complex skill requirements of a modern economy, and more challenging to the sophisticated and well-trained students who are expected to emerge from the reorganised secondary school.

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SCIENCE POLICY AND PLANNING IN THE USSR

Loren R. Graham

FEW contemporary scholars would question the thesis that science is one of the most powerful forces in society. Only since the second world war, however, has this recognition so spread among government leaders that every modern state has now provided, in one way or another, machinery for both consulting its scientists and influencing the development of scientific research.

In discussing in historical terms the development of science policy and planning in different nations it is important to distinguish between individual and national efforts. If one is looking for moments when governments attempted to formulate policies towards specific problems of a scientific or technical nature, a multitude of examples before the present century can be identified. If however one is looking for moments when a nation attempted to formulate a policy towards science and technology as a whole, the first important instance was the Soviet Union in the nineteen-twenties. This effort was plagued with difficulties of great complexity, both political and technical, and in the final analysis must be judged as unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was the first nation fully to recognise science as a national resource, systematically to commit large portions of its budget to the promotion of research, and to attempt to plan the progress of scientific development.

Russia in the first decades of the twentieth century was in a rather unusual position. Notwithstanding its economic and educational underdevelopment, it possessed a surprisingly strong foundation in the sciences. The names of Lomonosov, Lobachevsky, Mendeleyev, Pavlov, and Chebyshev are only a few of those indicating by 1917 that Russia was rapidly advancing in the sciences. This occurred within an organisational structure already different from those of western Europe. The Academy of Sciences of St Petersburg, although feeling the competition of the universities, was the only one of the eighteenth-century European academies of sciences which still attempted to dominate the science of its nation. The science found in the Academy was primarily theoretical in orientation.[1] Since industrial research laboratories were practically unknown in pre-revolutionary Russia, the theoretical concentration of the Academy (and universities) was not balanced by technological

[1] The Academy began to turn towards applied science before the Revolution. In 1915 it created the Commission for the Study of Natural Productive Forces which promoted the exploitation by Russian industry of previously unknown or unutilised natural resources. Under the energetic leadership of V. I. Vernadsky it fulfilled a genuine need, and undoubtedy would have continued its activities after the war whatever political path the country followed. See B. A. Lindener, *Raboty rossiiskoi akademii nauk v oblasti issledovaniia prirodnykh bogatstv rossii* (Petrograd, 1922).

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research. Thus science was characterised by a theoretical tendency and a high degree of centralisation. These two aspects of pre-revolutionary Russian science, coupled with the Bolsheviks' commitment to science and economic planning, go a long way towards explaining the scientific policy of the Soviet government before the second world war. The old emphasis on theory was seen as a disadvantage to be overcome; the centralisation was an advantage to be utilised. Soviet devotion to applied science was a needed correction to Russia's scientific tradition, an expression of the current interpretation of the Marxist principle of the unity of theory and practice, and the logical policy for a nation attempting to expand industrially at a breakneck pace.

The two periods in Soviet history most interesting from the standpoint of science and planning are the nineteen-twenties and the years since 1956. In the first period the scientific institutions of Russia were still those of the tsarist era. Not until 1929 was a member of the Communist Party elected to the Academy of Sciences, and not until the early thirties was the research activity of the Academy substantially affected by party desires. But throughout the twenties a long and vital debate over science policy and planning was held in the scholarly journals. In many respects the discussions after Stalin's death began where they had ended before the consolidation of his power at the end of the twenties. But since in the intervening decades the rest of the world had moved forward at a very rapid rate in its appreciation of the national importance of science, the discussions which in the twenties had been truly novel when compared with other nations were, after 1956, merely a reflection of similar, though not identical, concerns elsewhere. The Soviet Union may possibly regain in the future its innovative position in the formulation of policies toward science, and it is certainly making efforts in this direction, but it has not yet succeeded.

NO previous government in history was as committed to the idea of science as that of the Bolsheviks in 1917. Those who see a necessary contradiction between ideology and science may object to this observation, since the communist commitment to science was without question ideological. But the Bolsheviks saw their ideology as being synonymous with science and they promised from the start the patronage of science on an unprecedented scale. Science was to them particularly appropriate as a remedy for the ills of Russia. It would conquer Russia both as a state of mind and as a state of nature. It would overcome the medieval mysticism of the Church while providing the key to the country's natural riches.

Science would thus be one of the most influential allies of the Soviet state, and one of the major goals of the early Soviet leaders was to provide the best conditions for its development. They believed that within every society there existed an 'environment for science' which helped or hindered the development of science and technology. A number of variables could theoretically be adjusted in the hope of creating the

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optimum environment, such as the form of the educational system, the system of rewards, the provision of material support (laboratories, equipment, operating funds), the economic environment, and even the value-system. The communist rulers of Russia stated repeatedly that they intended to construct the ideal society for science. Their critics, who termed the Bolsheviks 'wreckers of science', may have correctly described the more violent episodes of later years but they have missed most of the drama of the situation by confusing results with intentions. Rather than destroy science, the Bolsheviks hoped to transform it, to create a new 'socialist science'.

The term 'socialist science' implies that the Soviet Marxists defined science as they did literature, art, law, and the other layers of the 'superstructure'. Just as the transformation of production relations in the economic base after the Revolution would yield new forms of literature, so would it determine the evolution of a new science. Many Soviet Marxists did indeed consider science to be a part of the superstructure in the Marxist scheme, but by no means all of them were agreed on this, and its exact position in the Marxist definition of society's activities has remained a troublesome problem down to the present day. Some of the Bolsheviks who seemed *a priori* most likely to consider science a part of culture, and therefore a derivative phenomenon, were actually of the opposite view. The leader of the proletarian culture movement, A. A. Bogdanov, who spoke constantly in the early years of the regime of the new literary and artistic culture being created by the proletariat, was, paradoxically, very impressed by the homogeneity in all cultures of the natural sciences. He spoke of the 'single thermodynamic' method being created by physicists, and he specifically excluded these areas of science from the superstructure.[2] But even Bogdanov believed that science would take on some new characteristics in the new epoch, particularly those of 'collective labour', and his respect for contemporary western science was often lost in the revolutionary clamour for a new culture.[3]

The discussion in the twenties on the place of science was connected with the dispute between the two factions in Soviet philosophy, the so-called mechanists and the Deborinites. Neither side held unanimous opinions on the position of science in the base-superstructure system, but they did differ in their emphases. The victory of the Deborinites in the

[2] See his lectures delivered to the *Proletkult* group in the spring of 1919: A. A. Malinovsky, *Elementy proletarskoi kultury v razvitii rabochego klassa* (Moscow, 1920), pp. 83–85; also his *Tektologiia, vseobshchaia organizatsionnaia nauka* (Moscow, 1922).

[3] Trotsky did not believe in the possibility of creating a proletarian culture, citing shortage of time as a reason; Lenin and Lunacharsky saw both national and supranational elements in culture, and believed that certain aspects of a culture carry definite class characteristics; Bukharin, however, believed that a proletarian culture could be created. The view of Lenin and Lunacharsky received party sanction. It should not be inferred that those who believed in the creation of a proletarian literature also favoured a proletarian science. Bogdanov did not believe in a new science; Bukharin said that he did, but one wonders how much such statements were merely rhetorical.

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late twenties marked an increasing willingness to assign science to the superstructure, a tendency which persisted after they were succeeded as the exponents of Soviet philosophy by Stalinists. Mechanists like I. I. Stepanov believed that science is nearly homogeneous in different social systems, the Deborinites that science is tinged with class interests. V. P. Egorshin, a young pupil of Deborin, was one of the most outspoken on the subject, maintaining that 'modern natural science is just as much a class phenomenon as philosophy and art. . . . It is bourgeois in its theoretical foundations'. Another writer of similar orientation maintained that 'science is one of the highest, if not the highest, layer of the superstructure'.[4]

The ideologists who won the approval of Stalin after 1931 believed that the relationship between the base and the superstructure was more complex than either the mechanists or Deborinites had granted, but they still included science in the superstructure. O. Iu. Shmidt, later a well known geographer and cosmogonist, commented in a 1932 article on 'Natural Science': 'In each epoch the level of natural science is determined in the final analysis by the level of development of the forces of production. However, natural science, as a part of the " superstructure ", is essentially influenced by other parts of the " superstructure ", especially philosophy and religion, and at the same time influences in its turn the development of the forces of production.'[5]

The major emphasis of the Soviet Marxists dealing with science in the late twenties and throughout the thirties was on receiving practical benefits rapidly. There were two reasons for this. The first was the obvious one. Like members of state bureaucracies everywhere, the Soviet leaders believed that resources expended on academic pursuits should promise rewards. The Soviet state needed a quick return on every investment in order to resist foreign enemies and to begin constructing a new society. Long-range research projects would simply have to wait. The second reason for the drive towards pragmatic research was the effort to correct the exaggerated emphasis in pre-revolutionary Russia on theoretical research. The particular ideological bias of the Bolsheviks towards uniting theory and practice gave the turn towards engineering additional impetus.

In the last years of Stalin's life several important shifts in the ideological view of science occurred, as the national goals in science changed from merely aiding industrialisation and military power to providing additions to the basic fund of human knowledge, the source of further practical advances. As the vice-president of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences later observed: 'In the future the role of pure science will be constantly growing. As long as we had the task of catching up with the technological development of the capitalist West, we could afford to

[4] Cf. V. P. Egorshin, 'Estestvoznanie i Klassovaia borba', *Pod znamenem marksizma*, no. 6, 1926, p. 135; S. Volfson, 'Nauka i borba klassov', *VARNITSO*, February 1930, p. 23.

[5] *Bolshaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. XXIV, 1st ed., 1932, p. 559.

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devote less attention to long-range research, making use of the scientific and technological experience accumulated abroad. But those who are marching ahead have no one to learn from '.[6]

The new emphasis on theory was accompanied by a slow transfer of science from the superstructure to the base in the Marxist model of society. Late in his life Stalin initiated this process in his well known letters on linguistics. In these he announced that science was neither of the superstructure nor of the base; it was, instead, in a sort of limbo in the middle. This launched a new debate on the place of science which continued after his death, the outcome of which was the displacement of science into the economic base. The 1961 Party Programme flatly stated that ' science will become, in the full sense of the word, a direct productive force ', in other words, a means of production. Thus science has now emerged with a remarkable degree of autonomy. The new position is reflected in many changes in the attitude to science, from the party rules which now say that party members do not have authority over research scientists in theoretical institutes, to the decreased influence of party philosophers in discussions of the validity of scientific theories.[7]

One can be fairly certain, however, that science will never be completely freed from political influence in the Soviet Union. Indeed it is doubtful whether such an achievement is even theoretically possible or desirable. In the West the many connections between science on the one hand, and politics and philosophy on the other, are more obvious today than ever before. What the scientist wants and needs before all else is intellectual freedom within the boundaries of his research topic. He may object to particular forms of administrative support, especially when decisions of priorities are made which adversely affect projects he considers important, but almost all scientists will agree that some degree of such management is necessary. Thus the discussion of science and politics in the Soviet Union has shifted in the last few years from questions of intellectual freedom on particular research topics, now substantially achieved in all but a few areas, to discussions of the planning and management of science.

THE planning of science was a subject of much debate in the nineteen-twenties as well. Planning was, and is, the preferred method of socialist and communist theorists in all human activities, and particularly economics. Science, however, presents unique problems as an object of planning. Even among advocates of a planned economic system one could find many who would insist that theoretical research cannot be planned in any genuine sense, arguing that there is an essential difference between science, where progress depends on the discovery of unknown facts and the construction of new hypotheses at indefinite times in the future, and industrial production, which requires the converging of at

[6] V. Glushkov, ' Prokladyvat tropy v neznaemoe ', *Izvestiia*, 19 October 1963.
[7] See ' Partorganizatsiia nauchno-issledovatelskogo instituta ', *Partiinaia Zhizn*, no. 16, 1963, p. 33.

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least theoretically ascertainable quantities of materials, properly trained personnel, and equipment. Scientific research seems to contain a constant feedback element; its future path is frequently determined by what was most recently learned. And the most ardent opponents of the planning of science maintain that there is something creative, perhaps mystical, and certainly mysterious, in the process of advanced theoretical research which totally defies rational investigation.

All Soviet Marxist writers on the subject of science have favoured greater coordination of the research programme, but their views have ranged over a large spectrum, from the denial of any significant difference between physical and mental labour, and therefore a firm belief in the planning of science as of industry, to an affirmation of the essential intuitiveness of the process of discovery. During the twenties, when the greatest controversy over the methods of planning science occurred, no effort was actually made to implement such plans. Indeed, the attitude of the Soviet government towards scientists was at this time quite permissive. Trotsky and Kalinin frequently commented that scientists who went about their research with no conscious plan or even commitment to the Soviet state were in fact promoting its interests.[8]

This leniency indicates clearly that a policy of enforced planning controls, rigidly administered from above, was not intended in the twenties. Nevertheless, the *idea* of the planning of science was even in this period clearly accepted by most government administrators, as well as by many economists and sociologists; the scholarly journals contained many articles discussing the ways in which such planning could be achieved. In the relatively free period before the first five-year plan (1928–1932) these writers apparently believed that their designs would be accepted voluntarily, at least by scientists with a political commitment to the regime. With the transition from the New Economic Policy to forced industrialisation, the pressure for greater coordination of research grew steadily, and the increasingly coercive nature of the planning controls became obvious.

The first step in planning any activity is the gathering of empirical information. In the years between 1921 and 1934 workers at the Academy of Sciences made statistical and organisational surveys of the scientific personnel and institutions of the USSR which were remarkable in their detail and in their awareness of the potential of science and scientific institutions as natural resources. Anticipating similar work in other countries by more than a decade, the multi-volume surveys, not to mention less ambitious handbooks and outlines, provide an enormous amount of data for the study of the growth of scientific disciplines and institutions in Russia.[9] The organisational surveys were conducted by a commission

[8] David Joravsky explored the government's policy of leniency toward scientists in his *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science* (New York, 1961); pp. 65–67, 97–98.

[9] S. F. Oldenburg, ed., *Nauka i nauchnye rabotniki SSSR*, 4 vols. (Leningrad, 1926–34); O. Iu Shmidt and B. Ia. Smuchkevich, *Nauchnye kadry i nauchno-issledovatelskie uchrezhdeniia SSSR* (Moscow, 1930); see also L. V. Sergeevich, 'Zadacha sobiraniia nauki', *Nauchny Rabotnik*, No. 9, 1926.

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of the Academy of Sciences called 'Science and Scientific Workers of the USSR' under the principal direction of Academician S. F. Oldenberg. One volume, published in 1930, covered the activities of 1,227 scientific research establishments and 151 higher educational institutions with 411 different departments. It included not only academies, universities, and research institutes, but also scientific societies, associations of doctors and other professions, and local organisations.[10] The emphasis was on the gathering of new data which could be used according to the new techniques of the social sciences for exploration of the sociology and political administration of science, and even for investigations of the social and genetic sources of creativity. The fact that these data were never adequately used, as a result of the atrophy of the social sciences in the Soviet Union after the twenties, does not destroy the interest or value of the surveys. The extent to which this early work on the science of science has been overlooked by non-Soviet analysts is clearly revealed by Stevan Dedijer's recent advice to governments to make a major effort on a national level to 'undertake the continuous compilation of the country's research resources, their growth, their distribution according to branches, fields and types of research, institutional settings and geographic area', and his observation that 'one may recall what was said in 1960 of 147 of the world's 150 countries: they know the number of their donkeys, but not the number of their research workers. The United States began to make such surveys as far back as 1938'.[11] The evidence here illustrates, however, that the Soviet Union completed such surveys years earlier.

Perhaps the most dramatic evidence of how widely the aspirations of some Soviet investigators missed the reality of the thirties can be seen in the case of Iu. A. Filipchenko. Concerned for the fate of the Russian intellectual elite, which he thought was not reproducing itself, Filipchenko and his co-workers conducted a detailed survey of the genealogical backgrounds and social and ethnic origins of all members of the Academy of Sciences from 1846 to 1924.[12] Filipchenko, a recognised geneticist and director of the Bureau of Eugenics of the Academy, considered the dissemination of marriage advice to be one of the duties of his bureau; he hoped thereby to enrich Russian science by strengthening the genetic qualities of the scientists.

The possibility of Soviet sponsorship of eugenics for the cultivation of talent may seem remote to contemporary observers who are familiar with the later Lysenko episode, but the twenties were a period in the Soviet Union when many things seemed possible. Although Filipchenko himself backed away from radical eugenic proposals, others wrote that

[10] Shmidt and Smuchkevich, op. cit.

[11] Stevan Dedijer, 'The Science of Science: A Programme and a Plea', *Minerva*, Summer 1966, p. 501.

[12] T. K. Lepin, Ia. Ia. Lus, Iu. A. Filipchenko, 'Deistvitelnye chleny akademii nauk za poslednie 80 let (1846–1924), *Izvestiia buro po evgenike*, No. 3, 1925. See also his 'Spornye voprosy evgeniki', *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi Akademii*, No. 20, 1927. I am grateful to David H. Miller of Columbia University for assistance in doing research on Filipchenko's activities.

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the dissolution of bourgeois family relations would permit couples to choose sperm donors of great intellectual ability, who would provide for '1,000 or even 10,000 children'.[13] This would have been the planning of science (or scientists) to the ultimate degree. Such recommendations appeared in scholarly journals, but there is no evidence that they were seriously considered as public policy. They do, however, provide an example of the dimensions of the enthusiasm for a planned society and a planned science.

In the twenties, many attempts were made to improve the methodology of scientific research, among the most interesting being those concerned with the scientific management of labour, both industrial and scientific. Some, like K. Kh. Kekcheev and V. V. Arshinov, proposed improvements in publication and indexing operations. As early as 1925 M. Dynnik called for the construction of computers for information retrieval.[14] The often Utopian and naive efforts to apply quantitative methods to a study of creativity is exemplified by the work of N. P. Suvorov, who tried in 1928 to compute the effectiveness of theoretical scientific research by algebraic formula.[15] Such efforts have, however, had a genuine resurgence in the Soviet Union in recent years. Throughout much of the twenties V. V. Dobrynin worked for the definition of the optimal environmental conditions for scientific research, and included under the slogan 'rationalisation of labour' such factors as the family and sexual life of the scientist; he proposed the organisation of a society for the promotion of creativity. In response to Dobrynin's proposal the Academy of Sciences appointed a commission of academicians to help organise the new society.[16] The society eventually died the same death as the other experimental Soviet groups of the twenties in the arts, education, and literature.

The concern of the scientific management of labour movement for the planning of science revolved essentially around problems of individual creativity rather than the most logical problems of the planning of science, those of thematic planning and the establishment of national priorities. Despite all the writing about the planning of science which one can find in the Soviet journals of the twenties, the only time when these major problems received full attention was at the first All-Union Conference on the planning of scientific research work in Moscow in April 1931.[17] Almost a thousand delegates, including 607 scientific

[13] Quoted in Joravsky, *Soviet Marxism and Natural Science*, p. 306.

[14] Mikhail Dynnik, 'Problema nauchnoi organizatsii nauchnogo truda', *Nauchny Rabotnik*, No. 1, 1925. Compare Dynnik's call for computers with later predictions by Soviet educators that science students would carry 'mental work machines' in their pockets to provide factual information and formulas. See Oliver J. Caldwell and Loren R. Graham, 'Moscow in May 1963', *Office of Education Bulletin*, Washington, D.C., 1964, p. 29.

[15] N. P. Suvorov, 'O metodakh izucheniia effektivnosti nauchnykh rabot', *Nauchny Rabotnik*, December 1928.

[16] V. V. Dobrynin, 'Problema organizatsii tvorcheskogo truda', *Nauchny Rabotnik*, May-June 1928.

[17] The stenographic report of this conference was published: *Vsesoiuznaia konferentsiia po planirovaniiu nauchnoissledovatelskoi raboty, I-ia* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1931).

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workers and 23 full members of the Academy of Sciences, attended the conference. Bukharin's keynote speech on the methodology of planning science marked a high degree of sophistication in the approach of communist planners to the problem of charting the development of scientific research.[18] Research workers in agriculture, health, transport, and industry spoke on the problems of the planning of science in their particular areas.

Bukharin, who took an active part in administering scientific research as a member of several governmental committees, was a strong advocate of the planning of science. Like Academician Oldenburg, who called lack of orderliness a primary characteristic of Russian science, Bukharin believed that the planning of science was more necessary in Russia than in advanced western countries. His major contribution to the debate on the planning of science was the definition of the phases of science which, in his view, were amenable to planning:

1. *The determination of the share of the country's labour and budgetary resources to be devoted to science.* Bukharin gave scientific research the highest of all priorities, higher even than that of heavy industry.

2. *The logistic support of scientific-research institutions.* Here again he assigned the highest priority to science, recognising that fitful logistic support is more damaging to a laboratory than to an industry.

3. *Location of scientific-research institutes.* Bukharin called for the elimination of the old St Petersburg 'centre,' and sketched the model for such provincial centres of science as Novosibirsk later became.

4. *The supply of scientific researchers.* He asked for the planned training of scientists, according to need.

5. *The subjects of research.* Bukharin recognised difficulties in actually planning the topics of research, but called for emphasis on those which would be of the most service to socialist construction. He granted allotments of free, unprogrammed, time to all researchers.

This period of investigation into the methodology of planning science ended in 1931. Bukharin's proposals remained the most perceptive of those advanced, and although they are not credited to him in the Soviet Union they are still relevant today, even though thinking about science policy has by now gone far beyond them.

The Soviet inquiry into the nature of science enjoyed an offshoot among socialists in Britain after it died in the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1931 a group of Soviet scholars, including Bukharin, N. Vavilov, and B. Hessen gave papers in London at the international congress on the History of Science and Technology. J. D. Bernal called Hessen's paper on Newton 'for England the starting point of a new evaluation of the history of science'.[18a] Partly as a result of

[18] Loren R. Graham, 'Bukharin and the Planning of Science', *The Russian Review*, April 1964.

[18a] For the Soviet papers see *Science at the Cross Roads* (London, 1931). J. D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science* (New York, 1939), p. 406.

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their contact with the Soviet scholars, a group of British scientists and historians began to work for a similar new understanding of science. Without any question the most important book to come out of this group was J. D. Bernal's *The Social Function of Science*, which Derek Price recently praised as the first approach to the scientific analysis of science, a 'monumental work'.[18b] Yet we know from Bernal himself that one of his major intellectual debts was to the Soviet analysis of science in the last moments before complete Stalinisation.

FROM the early thirties until after Stalin's death very little was done about the formulation of science policy and the planning of science. It is true that the Academy of Sciences and other research institutions annually submitted research plans to government authorities, but these were not very meaningful. They provided a means of disciplining scientists who either violated rules or tried to concentrate on research too remote from the needs of the state. The circumstances gave rise to a great many anecdotes concerning the lack of genuine content of the research plans. One concerns the research director who remarked that he had no difficulty submitting annual research plans and fulfilling them every time. The first year he was asked to submit such a plan, he said he simply reported that he would make preparations to conduct research which he, in fact, hoped actually to accomplish in that year. Then each year he stated in his plan that he intended to do what he had in fact done the year before, and of course he was always able to report one hundred per cent fulfilment. Such stories convey the sterility of much planning of research under Stalin. Nevertheless, the entire effort to plan research was not meaningless. Just as weapons research in the United States has been completed under pressure of constant requests from above for success, so also was research frequently completed in the Soviet Union under planning controls. Some of the planning, such as the assignment of priorities in logistics and personnel supply, had beneficial effects for certain research topics.

After Stalin's death there was a gradual return to discussing the planning of science. No one now dreamed of successfully predicting the future of scientific research in detail, but many Soviet scholars remained committed to the belief that it was an activity that could be improved through scholarly scrutiny. The scientific management of labour movement made a surprising comeback. In 1955, as a part of the revival of social science research in the Soviet Union, a new Scientific Research Institute of Labour was established under the new State Committee on Problems of Labour and Wages. Much of the fervour that once went into the old movement was now transferred to cybernetics. And cybernetic analysis seemed appropriate for the study of the methodology

[18b] D. J. De S. Price, 'The Science of Science', in Maurice Goldsmith and Alan Mackay, eds., *Society and Science* (New York, 1964), p. 202.

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of planning of science, since it was the constant feedback of newly-discovered knowledge which had derailed past attempts to plan science.

The most important efforts in recent years to improve the methodology of the planning of science have been made by economists, who have been directing their work to the construction of effectiveness coefficients for capital investment for different types of scientific research. This mathematical method bears many resemblances to the calculations of recoupment time for investment in heavy machinery and plant facilities, except that in scientific research qualitative measurements are much more important. Some of the best work in this field has been done in east Europe, particularly in Czechoslovakia. Two Czech authors recently published an article in the Soviet Union in which they applied detailed economic analysis to scientific research in a form not very different from that used by certain western research industries.[19] Thus, while the Soviet Union is turning its attention anew to the planning of science, it is no longer the leader in this field, as it was in the twenties. Where planning concepts can be applied to science and technology, western industries and governments are actively engaged, while eastern Europe in some respects is ahead of the Soviet Union.

Before leaving the subject of the planning of science, a short comment on Soviet accomplishments in this field should be made, as well as a few comparisons of the theory of planning science with the theory of economic planning. In certain respects Soviet achievements in formulating science policy have been considerable and should be recognised to a much greater degree abroad than they have been. The two areas in which Russia led the way in thinking about scientific research were recognition of science as a natural resource and the collection of data concerning it, and the posing of legitimate questions about the ways in which a government can aid the development of science. The particular Soviet responses to these challenges involved a great deal of coercion and suppression of freedom, but western nations have recently found themselves faced with at least similar questions as they have attempted to develop national science policies.

When one goes beyond the question of commitment to science, however, the Soviet achievement in the twenties and early thirties in planning science is much less clear. The early effort to collect information concerning science was admirable, but the compilation of statistical surveys is only a preparatory step to planning. Many of the Soviet articles which, according to their titles, concerned the planning of science were little more than hortatory proclamations that 'science must be planned'. Even in the simplest of articles, however, certain priorities of planning were implicit. In general, the closer the author stood to the party, the more he urged that scientific research be a service function of industry. The closer he stood to the scientists themselves, the more he talked of the ultimate value of all scientific research.

[19] Z. Soiak and L. Rzhiga, 'Problemy planirovaniia nauchno-teknicheskogo progressa', *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 12, 1964.

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The most interesting effort to elaborate a national policy on science was Bukharin's presentation to the planning conference. His attempts to isolate the aspects of science which can be planned was of genuine significance. But not even Bukharin made anything approaching a theoretical breakthrough in the planning of science. If one reviews his proposals, it becomes clear that they concerned two types of activity, which should be carefully distinguished. One type has been fairly well planned in the Soviet Union and a number of western countries in the decades since 1930, and particularly since the Second World War; success in planning the second type has been conspicuously absent. J. R. Steelman underlined the difference:

> At the outset it is well to distinguish between planning for research and planning of research. It is well accepted that consistently productive research must be planned for in the sense that competent men must be assembled, facilities provided, and equipment installed for their use.[20]

It is the planning for research in which governments have been most successful. Four of the five aspects which Bukharin insisted could be rationally planned may be classified as 'planning for research' rather than 'planning of research'. These four concerned the determination of the share of the country's labour and budgetary resources to be devoted to science; the support of scientific research institutions; their location; and the number, distribution, qualifications, and use of scientific personnel.

But when he discussed the problem of planning the subjects of scientific and engineering research, he actually did no more than present a table of priorities: the problems which promised the most to the Soviet government should receive the greatest attention. But he did not attempt to define the criteria by which the government could decide just which these were. Questions of time are crucial in making choices; the decision between pursuing cancer research and oceanographic research cannot be made simply by asking which promises the most in terms of state interest. Both could be immensely important, but unless some sort of conjecture about the length of time and amount of money expended before receiving large benefits can be made, the discussion remains rather pointless. And no criteria for such estimates beyond simply asking the opinions of the leading scientists in the field have been advanced. Thus, in the end, the planning *of* science remains an extremely intractable problem.

The distinction between planning of science and planning for science is a useful concept even though the distinction cannot be indefinitely maintained in practice. The planning *of* science is truly impossible. Planning *for* science over short periods of time is a viable approach, but after an appreciable length of time the unpredictability of the actual progress of science will upset and transform these plans. The kinds of

[20] J. R. Steelman, *Science and Public Policy*, vol. III (Washington, D.C., 1947), p. 28.

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equipment and amount of matériel needed for any research laboratory will depend on the course of actual scientific research, and the farther into the future one attempts to look, the wider the spectrum of alternatives of equipment, matériel, and even personnel. There is a very real and essential difference between the planning of science and the planning of industry. Many of the troubles which the Soviet Union has encountered in planning industrial production have arisen from trying to plan the whole industrial plant at once, with all its interdependent products. To plan for a long way ahead the activities of *one* plant in isolation, given the authority and funds to order in advance all necessary matériel and personnel, is possible with small margins of error. Planning in isolation the work and logistic support of a large physics laboratory, however, would break down much more rapidly. Soviet planners now recognise these differences more openly than in the early period of rapid industrialisation.[21]

THE system of planning for science which is currently in operation in the Soviet Union is a compromise between what has been called the 'arithmetic sum' and 'teleological' methods, but the overwhelming majority of research topics are based on the former approach. That is, most research is based on a genetic growth from past work and only extremely rarely is a group of researchers given orders from above to radically alter the topic or pattern of research. There is probably greater continuity of research and research personnel in the Soviet Union than in the United States, where the constant shifting of employment as a result of competitive bidding for personnel keeps research in a state of flux. Soviet science administrators have commented that their future research possibilities are too much governed by their past activities: next year's plan is just an extension of last year's, with a percentage increment of personnel and research funds. In such a situation it is extremely difficult to differentiate between important research projects and unimportant ones in assigning funds. Directors of institutes usually struggle for more funds regardless of whether the value of research in their organisations is increasing or decreasing. One science planner recently commented that instead of selecting research topics for financial support, high-level administrators often pass out funds equally to all institutes on a per-man basis. 'Naturally', he added, such an 'expenditure funds out of the "communal pot" harms those institutes which are conducting important research, and rewards those not doing such work'.[22]

[21] The Nobel prize-winning chemist N. N. Semenov, who is also a leading administrator of Soviet science, commented in 1959: 'When you come down to it, it is impossible and irrational to plan the supply system of the Academy of Sciences. The output of the Academy's scientific endeavours does not represent material processed by machine but scientific value, which can never be planned in detail.' *Izvestiia*, 9 August 1959.

[22] B. Sarkisov, 'Voprosy planirovaniia razvitiia nauki i tekhniki', *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 11, 1964, p. 19.

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Where the Soviet system of planning for science works best, on the other hand, is on projects of the highest national priority. Then the most talented personnel can be assembled and the best materials obtained without competition from industry. The inherent difficulties of planning, which always increase as a project grows in size, can be at least partially overcome by centring attention on a small number of the most important aspects of the project. Thus, open-ended planning is particularly appropriate for scientific research in the Soviet setting.

A PLAN must have a director; much of the essential history of the Soviet Union's attempts to establish planned science is reflected in the rise and fall of various planning committees. These attempts can be divided into four periods: 1917–24; 1924–36; 1936–56; and 1956 to the present. The first period was one of control at the republic level. The second was a period of search for one central coordinating body in science affairs, a search which was gradually abandoned. The third was one of control at the all-Union level, but by conflicting authorities in the absence of central coordination. The fourth period is a reform period in which the search for one powerful coordinating organ was renewed, but which, as in the twenties, seems now doomed to failure. Thus the popular western image of tightly centralised Soviet science has never corresponded with the reality.

In the first period the government had little time to worry about the exact nature of the goals it wished to assign to the scientific establishment. Furthermore, since the Soviet Union was not formed until 1922, and did not possess a constitution until 1924, it was logical for the first committees concerned with science to be subordinate to the republic governments, rather than to central authorities in Moscow. In the early years of the regime, the old centres of science, such as the Academy of Sciences, continued their research as before the Revolution, to the extent that they were physically able to do so. The result was a proliferation of local planning bodies for science under the republic councils of people's commissars. When the Soviet Union in the late nineteen-twenties made serious attempts to establish centralised planning, the field was cluttered with various other governmental and semi-governmental committees with ill-defined powers.

In the early nineteen-twenties each republic had, under its Commissariat of Education, a Chief Administration of Scientific Institutions (*Glavnauka*) responsible for the formulation of policy for science. By far the most important of these was that of the Russian republic, which supervised the Academy of Sciences, the research laboratories attached to the universities, and also many of the independent research institutes. The closest approach to nation-wide coordination of science in the twenties was at the infrequent conferences held by the several Scientific Administrations. These meetings were the scenes of many jurisdictional disputes between the Administrations, the universities, the Academy of Sciences, and the central governmental organs. The Academy of

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Sciences repeatedly accused the Russian Scientific Administration of bureaucratic interference in scientific affairs.[23]

The first technological task which the Soviet government approached on a planned basis was the electrification of the country; the famous Government Commission for the Electrification of Russia (Goelro) was established 21 February 1920. The plan was viewed not simply as a schedule for electrification, but as a method for transforming the entire country. Lenin's well-known slogan, 'Communism is Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country' conveys the enthusiasm of the times.

Lack of space prohibits the discussion here of the many competing planning organs for science which evolved in the early twenties. Despite the fragmentation of authority, the grand dream of the rational, centralised state, not only planning scientifically, but planning science, was not forgotten. After the adoption of the 1924 constitution, and the formation of all-Union governing organs, the debate over a supreme planning organ broke out afresh, with greater intensity than before. Now it seemed natural that a permanent all-Union Science Committee directly under the USSR Council of Commissars should take over the functions previously performed at the republic level. The severe economic crisis had by this time passed, and the discussion of the methodology of long-range industrial planning inevitably involved science and technology. Yet, strangely enough, the much-talked-about national coordinating centre was not created. The reasons are somewhat unclear. The explanation given by the Soviet authority on the subject, Fedkin, provides certain clues:

> Whenever anyone proposed the formation of a special governmental organ, a Committee or a Ministry, other people objected that such an organ would be a superfluous, intermediate, bureaucratic department between the scientific institutions and the government and even between the scientific institutions and the ministries.
>
> Whenever anyone proposed giving the responsibilities for planning the most important scientific research to the Academy of Sciences, other people energetically insisted that this would convert the Academy from the greatest scientific centre of the country into a mere office on scientific affairs.
>
> The proposals for the organisation of a general governmental organ—a committee or Commissariat of Science—in later years did not receive the support of the directing bodies.[24]

The opposition of the republic authorities, particularly those of the Ukraine, was another reason for not centralising science policy. So too was the lack of enthusiasm for the planning of science of the leading natural scientists in the USSR Academy of Sciences. But the most important reason was the loss of interest of the leading party authorities

[23] G. I. Fedkin, *Pravovye voprosy organizatsii nauchnoi raboty v SSSR* (Moscow, 1958), p. 292. Other organs which played a role in science planning in the early years were the Supreme Economic Council and the Scientific-Technological Department of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Republic.

[24] Fedkin, op. cit., p. 298.

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in such an organisation, as revealed in the last sentence of Fedkin's statement. By the middle thirties the major bureaucratic features of Stalinist Russia were fully formed and there was little opportunity for renovation of governmental bodies.

The period from the middle thirties until after Stalin's death was a time, therefore, when the formulation of science policy was the responsibility of a multiplicity of different committees and government organs with conflicting jurisdictions. Informal and unofficial arrangements gradually became much more important than legal definitions of authority. Some important disputes were resolved at the all-Union level, or even in the highest organs of the Communist Party. Other decisions were made in a rather haphazard fashion at local levels. Four different organisations, or types of organisations, were deeply involved in science policy: the USSR Academy of Sciences; the State Planning Commission and its subordinate organs; the industrial commissariats or ministries, a number of which possessed planning organs for technology; and the commissariats or ministries of education. Of these four bodies the most important was the Academy of Sciences. Its influence was based on prestige rather than statute; indeed, members of the Academy frequently made policy recommendations for institutions which were completely outside its network. On the scale of authority based on scientific competence rather than organisational charts, the Academy was at the summit of the Soviet scientific establishment, even though it contained only a rather small minority of all scientists and engineers in its research institutes and branches. The Academy was, of course, also subject to higher authority; on several occasions its own research plan was rejected or amended by the Council of Commissars. Nonetheless, both as a group and through its individual members, the Academy was the most significant continuous influence in the area where science and politics meet.

Many of the older academicians were not pleased with their increasing involvement in the administration and planning of science, which they feared would make the Academy a bureaucratic centre for technology. As early as 1930 several of them proposed splitting the Academy into 'Lomonosov' and 'Mendeleyev' divisions, one to be devoted to pure science and free of planning controls, the other to planning technology for the Soviet state.[25] This plan was rejected by the party as a denial of the Marxist unity of theory and practice, but it still retains some interest since its division of pure and applied science resembles proposals made in the Soviet Union in recent years.

The Academy, which before the industrialisation drive had devoted itself primarily to theoretical science, in the following decades established institutes and laboratories devoted to such mundane tasks as power engineering, electric motors, welding machines, construction materials, water economy, mining, and forest products. The engineers in the

[25] A. N. Bakh, 'Vsesoiuznaia akademiia nauk i sotsialisticheskoe stroitelstvo', *Front Nauki i Tekhniki*, October 1932, p. 22.

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Academy outnumbered all the academicians in the social sciences and humanities.

Although the Academy enjoyed more prestige than any other single organisation in Soviet science, its research was concentrated in three distinct pyramids, only one of which it controlled. The institutions of higher education, including the universities, conducted much less research than their counterparts in western Europe and the United States, but they were nonetheless quite strong in certain fields, such as mathematics. The second pyramid was that of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the academies of the various republics. Research in the academies was (before 1961) coordinated by the presidium of the USSR Academy. The third hierarchy of research was the ministerial research establishments, or the industrial research institutes. Research in this area was formally coordinated by the State Planning Commission but actually each ministry before 1957 looked after its own research needs.

Since 1956 the system for the coordination of research and the formulation of science policy has been in almost constant reform, or discussion of reform. This period can be described, like the twenties, as one of search for a central coordinating authority. It seemed in 1961 that for the first time in the country's history this authority had been found. Developments since then, however, seem to signal a return to the pattern of the pre-1956 period, that of authority on the all-Union level by a number of bodies with conflicting authority.

In 1959–61 a great debate on the organisation of science occurred among scientists and government leaders.[26] To a certain extent this discussion can be described as another attempt to find a way to cope with the expanding and complex scientific establishment. The contradiction between the need for scientific initiative and the need for overall coordination was as sharp as ever. Even more important was the realisation among many leading Soviet scientists, led by the Nobel laureate N. N. Semenov, that a major turning point in Soviet science policy had been reached. The country had very nearly used up all the backlog of technological knowledge which it had systematically borrowed from the West. Soviet scientists and engineers were now standing alongside their western counterparts at the edge of established knowledge. This new realisation had extremely important implications for Soviet science policy and for the organisation of research. The Academy of Sciences should leave engineering tasks to Soviet engineers and industrial

[26] See my 'Reorganization of the Academy of Sciences' in Peter H. Juviler and Henry W. Morton, eds., *Soviet Policy-Making: Studies of Communism in Transition* (New York, 1967); also, Nicholas De Witt, 'Reorganization of Science and Research in the USSR', *Science*, July 1961; D. A. Senior, 'The Organisation of Scientific Research', *Survey*, July 1964; James M. Swanson, 'Reorganisation: 1963', ibid. The reforms were officially announced in 'O merakh po uluchsheniiu koordinatsii nauchno-issledovatelskikh rabot v strane i deiatelnosti akademii nauk SSSR', *Pravda*, 12 April 1961, and in M. V. Keldysh, 'O merakh po uluchsheniiu deiatelnosti akademii nauk SSSR i akademii nauk soiuznykh respublik', *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, June 1963.

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managers, now fully established with their own research institutes, and turn its attention to basic research.

The views of Semenov and his colleagues met with considerable opposition from the engineer-academicians, who reminded the theoreticians of the necessity to combine theory with practice. The engineer Bardin remarked that Semenov's proposed Academy of Sciences sounded strangely like the St Petersburg Academy, with its concentration on pure science. The university professors and republic academicians were also somewhat fearful of an intellectually dominant Academy of Sciences freed of economic and planning responsibilities.

The compromise which emerged in 1961 was closer to the wishes of the theoreticians than of the engineers and local scientists. Many of the engineering institutes were removed from the Academy, although none of the engineer-academicians was deprived of his rank. Above the Academy, and, indeed, above all scientific research institutes of the USSR, there was established a new State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research Work. Many western analysts saw this creation of a supreme body in science, after decades of proposals, as a severe demotion of the Academy of Sciences. To the natural scientists of the Academy, who form its vital core, the reform was, on the contrary, a tremendous victory, enabling them to shed a multitude of tiresome administrative, economic, and planning responsibilities. Although a number of other administrative reforms in Soviet science have occurred since 1961, the Academy has retained its right to devote itself primarily to theoretical research and, secondarily, to a number of the most advanced and significant technological problems, such as cybernetics.[27]

From the day of its creation the new super-committee experienced difficulties. The coordination of the entire scientific establishment was probably inherently impossible. The Academy, with its new-found freedom from narrow technology and strict planning controls, was particularly difficult to administer. Because of its unquestioned pre-eminence in the natural sciences it gradually gained *de facto* independence from the new committee (whose fortunes were probably not advanced by the uncovering on its staff of a western agent, Oleg Penkovsky). The committee began to devote its attention primarily to industrial research, rather than to all science and technology, as the original resolution establishing it had indicated. Thus the perennial problem of overall coordination of Soviet science re-emerged.

The reforms since 1961 have not so far been able to overcome these difficulties. In the spring of 1963, responsibility for the all-Union committee was transferred from the Council of Ministers to the Supreme Council of the National Economy, which emphasised its concentration

[27] In recent years cybernetics has become the most prestigious of all areas of research in the USSR. See my 'Cybernetics: Automation and Administration', in George Fischer, ed., *Science and Ideology in the USSR* (New York, 1967); also Maxim Mikulak, 'Cybernetics and Marxism-Leninism', *Slavic Review*, September 1965, and my 'Cybernetics in the Soviet Union', *Survey*, July 1964.

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on applied research. The Academy of Sciences was given control over the research in the republic academies and also in the universities, and hopes for a centrally coordinated science programme, which seemed on the point of fulfilment in 1961, again faded. On 2 October 1965 the State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research was transformed into the All-Union State Committee for Science and Technology. Its duties seem to be the coordination of technology rather than science. In the latter field the Academy still reigns supreme, although efforts are being made to rejuvenate basic research in the universities.

(Part of this article is based on a chapter in a book by the writer, *The Soviet Academy of Sciences and the Communist Party, 1927–1932*, to be published this year by the Princeton University Press.)

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PHILOSOPHY: THE BOLSHEVIK PERIOD

Eugene Kamenka

SENSITIVE, educated Russians have long recognised the tragic inadequacies of their country's past and present, inadequacies only underscored by the vastness of her territory and the pretensions of her rulers. The window that Peter the Great hacked through to Europe brought in the icy chill of realised inferiority; the increasing contact with Europe during and after the Napoleonic Wars exacerbated it. Russia was part of geography but not of history, Peter Chaadayev wrote to a lady some time between 1829 and 1831. Torn off from the West, Russia had not become an Eastern power, but merely languished at the crossroads.

> We are among those nations, he wrote, that do not fit into the structure of humanity, but are here to serve as a lesson to the world—at the present time, no matter what one says, we constitute a gap in human understanding. . . . In our homes we live as though in bivouacs: we are strangers in our own families; in our cities we are like nomads—worse than the tribes wandering in our steppes, because those tribes are more attached to their steppes than we are to our towns. . . . In the beginning savage barbarism, then crude superstition, then that brutal and humiliating [Tatar] domination whose spirit was later inherited by our national rulers—that is the sad story of our youth. We have never known an age of uninterrupted activity and the natural play of moral forces. . . . Our memory does not harbour any enchanting reminiscences, and our tradition knows of no edifying examples. If you look back at the centuries of our history and at the enormous territory we occupy on this planet, you will not find a single memory which would make you stop, or a moment which would speak of our past in a powerful, lively, and colourful manner. We have to have hammered into our heads the things which in other nations are a matter of instinct and habit.[1]

Philosophical reasoning, in the sense of close argument and careful logical analysis, has not been in the history of Russia a matter of instinct and of habit. The Eastern Slavs had no doctors of theology or of canon law, no medieval disputations, no Reformation or Counter-Reformation. Logic might have begun to flourish in the academies of Kiev; to the military autocrats of Muscovy it stood for foreign (Polish) cunning. 'The Russians are philosophers not in words, but in deeds', the Croatian Catholic priest Yuri Krizhanich, librarian and archivist in the Kremlin

[1] Chaadayev, *First Philosophic Letter*, in *Sochineniia i pis'ma* (ed. M. Gershenzon, Moscow, 1913–14), vol. II, pp. 111–14. The letter, originally written in French and first published in Russian in Nadezhdin's periodical, *The Telescope*, in 1836, caused an understandable sensation.

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between 1659 and 1661, wrote sadly after his unsuccessful attempt to bring the philosophic ideas of the Counter-Reformation into Russia.[2] The Orthodox Church, in his time and later, saw philosophy as irrelevant to salvation and subversive of faith: to the Orthodox and to the Sectarians western rationality produced Catholicism and its logical consequences—Protestantism and atheism. Russia's temporal rules were no doubt suspicious of Krizhanich's proselytising aims and activities, but more often than not in the centuries that followed they too were to regard philosophy as a dangerous import, leading men to contemplate the overthrow of kingdoms and the abolition of all authority. The Catherine who admired Voltaire and translated Beccaria allowed a follower of Hume to be forced out of the newly-founded Moscow University and a dissertation on natural religion to be publicly burnt. As professors of philosophy, mostly German, came to the new universities being founded in Alexander's reign, the censorship of philosophy lectures began in earnest until, in response to the Revolution of 1848, Nicholas I excluded philosophy (except for psychology and logic) from the university curriculum altogether. The total ban was lifted in 1863, but crippling restrictions remained in force until 1889. For more than three hundred years police and ecclesiastical censorship, backed by capital punishment, exile, monastic imprisonment, and the knout, had combined to make the frank discussion of anything affecting religion and authority impossible and the dissemination of secular learning difficult. In such a society, philosophy was hardly likely to flourish.

Conditions of religious and political oppression amid general backwardness tend to produce an indirect threat to philosophy and rational thinking that is often even more subversive of these than the direct impediments. The conditions of nineteenth-century Russia produced an intelligentsia more readily than they produced intellectuals: philosophy became ideology, more often the object of uncritical enthusiasm than of careful and critical study. Fichte and Schelling in the first decades of the century, Hegel and Feuerbach in the succeeding ones, had an appeal that Descartes, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant did not have—anthropology triumphed over analysis, the Promethean over the Socratic. Russians wanted solutions, not problems.

As we come closer to the twentieth century, through the growing movement of the revolutionary groups for union with 'the people' and the development of Russian Marxism, the consciously and unconsciously anti-intellectual trends in the radical Russian intelligentsia become even more marked. 'The Russian *intelligent*, in the literal meaning of the word, lives *outside himself* . . . recognising as the only subject worthy of his interest and concern something that lies beyond his personality—the people, society, government', M. O. Gershenzon wrote in the collection *Vekhi* (1909), in which the liberal intelligentsia strove to take stock after the 1905 uprising. The philosopher N. A. Berdyaev complained in the

[2] Krizhanich, *Dialogus de Calumnis*, cited from *Istoricheski arkhiv*, 1958, no. 1, p. 162, in James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe* (London, 1966), p. 309.

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same volume that 'love of egalitarian justice, public good, the well-being of the people, has all but destroyed the concern for truth'. The attitude of the intelligentsia, he said, could be formulated as 'may truth vanish without a trace, if through its destruction people's lives will become happier'. Four years later, indeed, that fierce pre-revolutionary defender of *partiinost*, Maxim Gorky the Bitter, was to attack the Moscow Art Theatre for staging *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Possessed:*

> Dostoevsky deeply understood and presented with relish two diseases bred in the Russian by his monstrous history, his dreary and humiliating life: the sadistic cruelty of a thoroughly disillusioned nihilist and its opposite, the masochism of a beaten, frightened creature . . . Dostoevsky is great and Tolstoy is a genius, and all of you, gentlemen, are gifted and clever; but Russia and her people are more important than Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and even Pushkin, to say nothing of ourselves.[3]

Not only Lenin, but even the comparatively detached and scholarly Plekhanov, appealed primarily to these extra-intellectual longings. The revolutionary Angelica Balabanoff, in this typical, found in Plekhanov's *The Development of the Monistic View of History* 'exactly what I needed at the time, a philosophy of method that gave continuity and logic to the processes of history and endowed my own ethical aspirations, as well as the revolutionary movement itself, with the force and dignity of an historical imperative'.[4]

THE great split between Westernisers and Slavophiles that dominated so much of the intellectual life of Russia in the nineteenth century was not productive of subtle and important philosophical argument. To the Westernisers, philosophy was primarily a means of overcoming Russia's stagnation and barbarism, her 'Asiatic' or 'medieval' past and her servile present. Cut off from full participation in western intellectual life, they became translators and popularisers of western conceptions, conceptions they were more concerned to propagate and adapt to Russian conditions than to examine and discuss for their own sake. The Slavophiles, recognising just as clearly that Russia stood outside the European *oikomene,* that its religion and its 'philosophy', its domestic life and its political traditions, made it an object of scorn and incomprehension to western man, reacted into a passionate defence of mystical togetherness and non-rational faith. 'Russia cannot be measured with a yard-stick'—'Western cunning'—individualism, rationalism, capitalism—are not for the Slav soul. Of course, both sides were able to make 'points', and often perceptive points—but they were more interested in life than in logic, in the history of Russia than in the history of philosophy, in material or spiritual salvation than in analysis

[3] Cited in Helen Muchnic, *From Gorky to Pasternak* (London, 1963), p. 89. Compare Belinsky's letter to Gogol: 'The Russian public can forgive a bad book, but not a harmful one!'

[4] A. Balabanoff, *My Life as a Rebel* (London, 1938), p. 18.

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and argument. Taken together with the comparative absence of an advanced division of labour and specialised professional traditions in Russian society, all this tended to produce what have been regarded as the main characteristics of the Russian 'philosophical' tradition: the ideal of *integral* knowledge, blending into a single harmony the nature of the cosmos and the aspirations of man; the tendency to fuse truth as righteousness and theoretical truth; the placing of ethical personalism at the very centre of philosophy. While these characteristics are at their most obvious in the work of the Slavophiles and Christians, they are as important in the work of the positivists and naturalists and in the revolutionary tradition that finally turned to Marxism as the union of theory and practice, of science and morality. 'Fearlessly to face reality and its reflection—the theoretical, objective truth', the populist Mikhailovsky wrote in the preface to the third edition of his *Collected Works*, 'and at the same time to defend truth as justice, the subjective truth—this is my life's purpose.' The result was both a failure to appreciate the critical, analytical content of the western philosophic tradition and a dissipation of energy into social and political writing of a popular character, writing that in itself reinforced moralising and popularisng habits of mind.

Nevertheless, the restoration of philosophy courses to the university curriculum after 1863 and especially the comparative relaxation of censorship in the 1890s, did a great deal to lay the foundations for the development of a professional philosophic tradition in Russia. What Professor Zenkovsky calls 'the period of systems' in Russian philosophy, beginning with Vladimir Solovyov,[5] is a period of academic philosophy taking seriously the professional traditions of (primarily German) philosophy—Hegelianism, neo-Leibnizianism (including Lotze), neo-Kantianism and, more in psychology and the natural sciences, positivism. It is common among traditional Russians to regard the birth of this more professional and systematic kind of philosophising as being due to the first of the Russian system-builders, Solovyov himself. But it seems to me that it has much more to do with the fact that philosophy was allowed back into the classroom, where it had to be taught seriously and systematically, and with the growing contacts with European intellectual life as censorship became looser and travel easier. In 1898, the journal *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, supported by the Moscow Philosophical Society, was started in Moscow, with professional articles on philosophical questions. More serious studies in the history of philosophy, in logic, ethics, and epistemology began to appear; Sofia Tseretelli at Yurev published her translations of Hume; the work of Husserl, of the Marburg school, of Rickert and Windelband became more widely known and published. Men like the Princes S. N. and E. N.

[5] Zenkovsky, *A History of Russian Philosophy* (Eng. trans. London, 1953), vol. II, p. 469 *et seq.*

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Trubetskoi, A. I. Vvedensky, I. I. Lapshin, S. N. Bulgakov, L. M. Lopatin, S. L. Frank, and V. F. Ern—to take a random sample of the professional philosophers of the time—were unquestionably as unimportant and as undistinguished by international standards as the run-of-the-mill professors of philosophy who dominated German universities between the collapse of Hegelianism and the neo-Kantian revival. Nevertheless, they were just as unquestionably men promoting the traditions and some of the values of philosophical enquiry in the technical sense, and laying the foundations for its further development. Apart from Solovyov—who had a vogue among foreign theologians and other uncritical thinkers—only two Russian philosophers proper, N. O. Lossky for his doctrine of direct knowledge (intuitionism), and N. A. Berdyaev as an early existentialist, have attracted any attention outside Russia, and then not a great deal. To be sure, it was the misfortune of Russian philosophy to become professional and more directly linked to European university life at a period of philosophic confusion and decline, and to be cut off from Europe again just as important new movements—logical positivism and epistemological realism, mathematical logic and the philosophy of science—were getting under way. Just as no-one today is likely to read Eucken and the Personal Idealists and feel that they are still important fifty years later, so few thinkers are likely to return to Russian professional philosophy on the eve of the Revolution for its own sake. Its importance is only that it serves to remind us how much a bare thirty years of comparative professionalism and still circumscribed freedom could accomplish, and how much more might have been accomplished if Lenin's October had not once again cut Russia off from Europe and soon made philosophy subservient again to a 'materialist' version of the ideas of Karamzin and Arakcheyev.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY Russian philosophy (except, perhaps, for the philosophy of law, where Petrazhitsky's psychological theory of law and legal norms had deserved, if brief, international standing), attracted no attention and acquired no standing above the remote provincial; Bolshevik philosophy in the years from 1919 to 1956 earned nothing but contempt from serious philosophers of all nationalities. Bolshevik theory and Bolshevik practice openly proclaimed goals that amounted to the complete politicalisation, dogmatisation, and vulgarisation of philosophy. Dialectical materialism became the official philosophy of the Communist Party and the Bolshevik State, consistently invoked as the ultimate ideological foundation of all communist political activity and as the only correct foundation for all science, whether social or natural. The repression of non-Marxist philosophy became a necessary consequence of the dictatorship of the proletariat: Lenin's principle of *partiinost* was taken to require of the philosopher complete identification with both the general theoretical and specific practical aims of the Communist Party. This view of philosophy as total (though allegedly scientific) ideological *Weltanschauung* quickly led to the

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blurring of all serious distinctions between the philosophical, the ideological, and the political. Bolshevism, insisting on the unity of theory and practice, made all the problems that arose in the building up of a communist society philosophical questions—whether they concerned military strategy, the nature of a 'Marxist' biology, or the raising of agricultural production. 'Philosophical' questions were discussed at meetings of factory workers and in popular publications; not only philosophers, but leading party administrators, not only philosophical publications, but the party press and the newspaper of the Red Navy, played decisive roles at certain stages of 'philosophic' discussion.

The attempt to make philosophy a mass ideology—Soviet primers of dialectical materialism were published in editions of 250,000 or 500,000 copies and yet quoted as serious contributions to a difficult and technical subject—led (not unnaturally in these conditions) to a philosophical dogmatism organised along religious lines. Philosophy was seen as having its sacred texts (Marx and Engels, and then Lenin and Stalin), its unchallengeable ecclesiastical authority (the Communist Party), its officially recognised teachers (the approved party ideologists, strictly censored and promptly removed for deviation or independence), and its innumerable heresies suppressed and persecuted as such. Consummated under Stalin, this dogmatic organisation of philosophy as a state ideology resulted in thinking which, as N. A. Berdyaev once put it, 'is purely anonymous'. Communist philosophers showered with praise any platitude or absurdity coming from their leaders; they attacked the disgraced or the unpopular in utterly unprincipled fashion; they confessed and recanted and attacked views they had themselves held a little earlier in the style made familiar by the Inquisition and heresy-hunts.

The adoption of Lenin's political style into philosophy—by men of infinitely less than Lenin's ability—led to a *reductio ad absurdum* of all his worst intellectual traits. His abusive style, his impatience with complexity, his readiness to ascribe unworthy political motives to any opponent, his insistence on bringing everything down to a single issue, and his unprincipled readiness to distort the positions he was criticising, all became pervasive features of Soviet philosophy, features that these philosophers defended in the most philistine way. Amid this dogmatism and cynicism, it was constantly proclaimed that dialectical materialism was the only scientific world-view. The suppression of all other philosophies and the failure to teach seriously even the history of philosophy were defended by analogy with the suppression of medical quacks and the failure to teach phlogiston theory to modern classes in chemistry. Yet to non-Marxist philosophers of the most divergent views, the scientific and intellectual content of dialectical materialism as a philosophy seemed remarkably slight and its basic propositions uninteresting in the light of contemporary philosophical developments. Substituting abuse for argument, constantly writing for a low-level audience, not subjected to intellectual criticism that counted in their eyes, Soviet philosophers seemed to their western counterparts

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to have fallen far behind the standards of criticism and analysis achieved by professional philosophers in Russia before the Revolution, let alone by contemporary western philosophers. The attempt to reduce all philosophical conflicts to the conflict between idealism and materialism obscured more than it illuminated philosophical problems; difficulties both in the Soviet conception of materialism and in the exposition and criticism of other philosophers, were constantly ignored, often by downright falsification of opponents who caused or brought out these difficulties. The concept of contradiction, so fundamental to Soviet philosophy, was never carefully examined and technical criticisms of Hegel's logic were never taken into account. For all the bombast and self-congratulation with which Soviet ideologists accompanied their work, the 'philosophy' of dialectical materialism in their hands became a system of platitudes, half-truths, and lies designed by unprincipled bureaucrats for semi-educated peasants.

Western critics have been rightly conscious of the crude political control that has determined the character of Soviet philosophy and made it a parody both of philosophy generally and of the thought of Karl Marx in particular. They have been somewhat less conscious of the less direct effects of the general social crudity that Bolshevism produced and elevated in Russia. The rejection of elegance, wit, and learning as characteristic of 'bourgeois' culture can still be felt among Soviet philosophers; the boorishness and simple-minded bluntness that have so long been exalted in Soviet social relations carry over into philosophical work. There is a naive nineteenth-century view of science as classification which determines the Soviet view of philosophy: the study of a subject should begin by defining the subject *per genus et differentiam*, show the more general class to which it belongs, and then address itself to its specific characteristics. On the whole, with the constant changes of political line and the consequent constant rewriting of textbooks, with the lack of serious monographic literature and of serious specialist courses, Soviet philosophical writing was mostly devoted to pedestrian classification and definition and the abuse of opponents, and not to the examination of problems of detail in specific areas. The enormous publicity given to dialectical materialism often makes the outsider forget that the study of philosophy in detail was for a long time discouraged in the Soviet Union, and that students and teachers of philosophy are still today underprivileged in relation to admission to study, exemption from productive work, funds, and travel. As an ideology, it has seemed to Soviet administrators, philosophy ought to be simple; in so far as it becomes complex it is a luxury.

What the western critic must not forget is that the October Revolution did not represent the consummation of the revolutionary strivings and traditions of the Russian intelligentsia, even in its most radical form. The emigration from Russia in the years of the Civil War included not only merchants and aristocrats, unpolitical poets and the Liberal (Kadet) intellectuals, but most of the Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary

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intelligentsia as well. To the majority even of Marxist intellectuals it seemed clear from July 1917 onwards, that Lenin was appealing to the anti-intellectual forces in Russian life and that his victory would mean an age of barbarism. (Non-Russian Marxists, Kautsky, Luxemburg, and Otto Bauer held much the same view.) The Menshevik Internationalist, N. N. Sukhanov, one of the few revolutionary intellectuals present in Petrograd from the first days of the February to the last days of the October Revolution, brings this out graphically by contrasting the people present at the second congress of Soviets summoned by the Bolsheviks on 25 October, with the membership of the first congress that met a few months earlier:

> The hall was filled with a crowd of a completely different order. Out of tunnels and obscure holes and corners had crept utterly crude and ignorant people whose devotion to the Revolution was spite and despair, while their socialism was hunger and an unendurable longing for rest. Not bad material for experiments, but—those experiments would be risky.[6]

This was the crowd with whose aid Lenin was able to disband the Constituent Assembly and to end parliamentary democracy before it had properly begun; this was the gallery to which Soviet philosophers were ordered to play.

When studying the philosophy of the Bolshevik period, we should not—in our preoccupation with its antecedents in Marxism and the traditions of the Russian intelligentsia, and in our concern with political direction—neglect the extent to which it reflected that crude communism, that universal envy and levelling, that Sukhanov sensed and Lenin exploited.

BOLSHEVISM may have aimed at a monolithic philosophy, unchanging in its fundamental principles, progressing steadily in one direction in its continued working out of details and its absorption of new developments. (The model, no doubt, was the workers' movement, surging on to victory.) In fact, of course, Soviet philosophy, like the Soviet State, already has a history—a history of conflicts and changes, of survivals and revivals, some of which mark the changes in the political organisation and spirit of Soviet communism and some of which—ultimately, perhaps more important—mark more pervasive changes in social climate.

The men who made the October Revolution quickly proclaimed the comprehensive nature of communist political control, but the reality took some time to achieve. The academic teachers of philosophy in Russian universities were for the most part religious philosophers, Hegelians and neo-Kantians with a strong tendency towards ethical personalism; during the disorganisation of the period of war communism (1917–21)

[6] Sukhanov, *Zapiski o revoliutsii*, here cited from Joel Carmichael, *A Short History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1966), p. 199.

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they were permitted to go on teaching, though under difficult conditions. 'Free philosophical societies', concerned to maintain traditions of non-Marxist philosophical discussion, were organised in Petrograd, Moscow, Kostrom, Saratov, and other towns; non-Marxist publications still appeared. The Institute of Red Professors and the Communist Academy established during this period were seen not as controlling all intellectual life, but as minority cells meant to aid the spreading of Marxism in intellectual circles. Then, in 1921, a serious campaign against religion and 'idealism' was inaugurated, non-Marxist professors in the ideological subjects were removed from their posts, intellectuals were arrested, and the leading academic philosophers were banished. From that time on, anti-Marxist philosophical activity, such as that of the religious philosopher, S. A. Askoldov—the son of the neo-Leibnizian philosopher, A. A. Kozlov—had to be carried on as an illegal, 'counter-revolutionary' act. (Askoldov organised a religious philosophical society, The Brotherhood of St Seraphim of Sarov, which met secretly until 1928, when all its members were arrested and Askoldov himself was exiled to the northern Urals. A well-known philosopher before the Revolution, when he had written on ontology and theory of knowledge, he was unable to publish until he escaped to Germany after the German occupation of Novgorod, in which he had been permitted to settle after his return from the Urals in 1935.)

Within the materialist camp, however, an official dogma and complete authoritarian control were not to be established until the consolidation of the Stalinist dictatorship in the years 1929 to 1931. Among communist writers, there were basic disagreements about the status of philosophy and about the respective roles of dialectic and materialism in dialectical materialism. As long as the views were communist, they were published by official publishing houses and their proponents could hold official positions. Further, a number of quasi-Marxist philosophers putting forward views that were clearly not dialectical materialism were able to have books printed as 'published by the author'. Such books included works by B. Ya. Rudaev, whose 'materialism' derived from Aristotle and Husserl as much as from Marx, V. N. Ivanovsky, who showed the influence of Vaihinger and Rickert, M. M. Rubenstein, another pupil of Rickert's who saw philosophy as not primarily methodology of science but as the exposition of values and the search for the meaning of life, and A. F. Losev. whose books on the philosophy of art, music, and language, and on ancient conceptions of the cosmos, show the influence of early phenomenology, especially in his analysis of the philosophical significance of naming.

Part of the difficulty was that communism in this period took very seriously its claim to be creating new material foundations on which a new proletarian culture would arise. Yet what this culture was, or would be, was still far from clear. Marx had written little—virtually nothing—on philosophy proper; Engels's later philosophical works were fairly general in character, and Lenin, too, had hardly been a systematic

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philosopher. In Russia itself Marxist philosophy of a more technical kind had been represented primarily by Plekhanov (who died in 1918), L. I. Akselrod, N. I. Bukharin, and A. M. Deborin, who certainly disagreed among themselves. There was a feeling that the whole history of philosophy should be re-written from the communist point of view; yet this task had barely been begun. There was a very great dearth of people with competent philosophical training and background; the standards required of people training to become teachers of philosophy or professional ideologists were abysmally low. As late as 1926, all that was required of persons wishing to study for the Candidate's Degree in the philosophical section of the Institute of Red Professors was a knowledge of the first volume of Lange's *History of Materialism* (the second had not been translated into Russian), Harald Höffding's *History of Modern Philosophy*, Gomperz's *Greek Thinkers*, and Wundt's *Introduction to Philosophy* (presumably because, although a non-Marxist, Wundt treats philosophy in an 'empirical' fashion as the inductive summation of the theses of particular sciences), and of dialectical materialist writers such as Engels, Plekhanov, Lenin, L. I. Akselrod, Bukharin, and Deborin.

At the same time a major conflict was going on within the communist camp over the very existence of a communist philosophy. While the tradition established by Plekhanov and supported by Lenin insisted that philosophy was a crucial part of Marxism and rested on a creative, materialist development of Hegelian dialectic, another group, consisting largely of natural scientists, claimed that Marxism meant the rout of all philosophy and its supersession by science. This group of 'mechanists' consisted of S. K. Minin, I. I. Stepanov-Skvortsov, A. I. Varyash, A. K. Timiryazev (son of the famous Russian physiologist), V. N. Sarabyanov and others, including in some respects Bukharin. The most extreme of these anti-philosophical views was to be found in S. K. Minin's article '*Filosofiya za bort*' (Overboard with Philosophy). Stepanov-Skvortsov, in a more substantial work, wrote: 'The Marxist recognises no special field of "philosophical activity" distinct from that of science; for the Marxist, materialist philosophy consists in the latest and most general findings of modern science. To understand any organic phenomenon is to trace it back to relatively simple chemical and physical processes.'[7]

In general terms, as Professor Wetter has reminded us, the mechanists argued that dialectic was merely a method and not present in reality. They agreed with Bukharin that the language of Hegelian dialectics could be transcribed into the language of modern mechanics and treated as a special case of the theory of equilibrium, here applied to material systems in motion. The mechanists thus attributed all motion to impulses from without—'contradictions' were the conflict of separate forces

[7] I. I. Stepanov, *Istoricheski materializm i sovremennoe estestvoznanie* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), p. 57, cited in Gustav A. Wetter, *Dialectical Materialism* (Eng. transl. London, 1958), p. 138.

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within each relevant system. There was no emphasis on dialectical self-propulsion or on the two sides of a contradiction presupposing each other. The mechanists argued that quality could be completely deduced from and reduced to quantity; 'quality', from the standpoint of logic, was a category of evaluation by consciousness. They denied that there were basic 'leaps' from the inorganic to the organic and from the organic to consciousness. In the social field the mechanists relied on a rigid economic determinism (*stikhinost*) by which socialism is simply fated and comes about by gradual quantitative changes in social forces. 'Freedom', they argued, was not a true dialectical counterpart to 'necessity', but an illusory concept expressing the fact that we did not know all the causes operative.

Though mechanist conceptions and naive scientific optimism were perhaps dominant in communist intellectual life between 1922 and 1926, the mechanists were strongly opposed by a number of Soviet philosophers later characterised as 'Menshevising idealists'. These were led by the then most learned of Bolshevik philosophers, the ex-Menshevik and pupil of Plekhanov, A. M. Deborin, and included Milonov, Perelmann, B. Hessen, G. S. Pymyansky, N. A. Karev, I. K. Luppol, Y. Sten, and others. The Deborinist view, developed mainly in controversy with the mechanists, put strong emphasis on the importance and integrity of philosophy (as dialectical materialism) and was largely based on the philosophical work of Plekhanov. 'Materialism rose again, enriched by all the acquisitions of idealism', Plekhanov had written in his *Defence of Materialism*. 'The most important of these acquisitions was the dialectical method'. The Deborinists argued that dialectical materialism exists as an independent discipline alongside the positive sciences and is the methodology and theory of scientific knowledge in general. The Marxist *Weltanschauung*, Deborin argued in his *Dialektika i estestvoznanie*, had three components—the materialist dialectic as a general scientific methodology and theory of knowledge, the dialectic of nature as the methodology of the natural sciences or scientific materialism, and the dialectic of history or historical materialism. Marx and Engels had established the guide-lines for all these but had elaborated only the third; the task of Soviet philosophers was to elaborate the first. In doing so, Deborin treated seriously the history of philosophy, especially Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and he brought out an edition of Hegel with an elaborate introduction. The Deborinists rejected both the *a priori* 'philosophy of nature' and the empirical conception of natural science as the mere unphilosophical collection of facts and building of inductive conclusions. Only dialectic could weld facts into a significant whole. They emphasised the internal contradiction of the Hegelian dialectic proper, in which the antithesis is presupposed by the thesis, brought into being by it and held in a single system with it. The Deborinists also put great stress on the law of the transformation of quantity into quality and therefore on the 'leaps' and the emergence of new forms. Mechanism, they said, left out of account the specific character of the specific levels

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or stages of the development of matter (being, life, consciousness); it left out of account the existence of these as particular modes or categories of being. The *origin* of the organic could be derived from the inorganic, but not its *form*.

Although the initial 'scientism' of the Bolsheviks gave aid and comfort to the mechanists, communist ideological tradition and doctrinal authority were on the whole on the side of the Deborinists. In 1922 Lenin had written to the journal *Under the Banner of Marxism* advising Bolshevik philosophers to regard themselves as a society of materialist friends of the dialectic of Hegel; the first publication, in 1925, of Engels's *Dialectics of Nature* (written 1872–86) lent the support of Engels to the proposition that higher forms cannot be reduced, without residue, to lower forms. Further support came from the publication in 1929 of Lenin's *Philosophical Note-Books*, treating philosophy as a central and creative field of Marxist endeavour. The Deborinists were already winning an organisational struggle: Deborin himself had been appointed Director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Communist Academy, he had been editor-in-chief of *Under the Banner of Marxism* since 1926, and editor of the philosophical section of the first *Soviet Encyclopedia* since the same year. In 1929, at the second All-Union conference of Marxist-Leninist scientific institutions, the Deborinists achieved a decisive condemnation of mechanism.

The victory of the Deborinists over the mechanists was aided by the impact of Einstein's theory of relativity and the electron theory generally upon scientific thought in the 1920s. Mechanism was condemned both as a departure from the Marx-Engels-Plekhanov-Lenin tradition of Marxism, and as being out of step with the developments of contemporary science. The Deborinist victory, however, was short-lived. On 27 September 1929, a speech of Stalin's had condemned the mechanists but at the same time complained that theoreticians generally had not kept pace with practical developments in the Soviet Union. The speech became a signal for an attack on two fronts, led by two new figures on the scene, M. B. Mitin and P. F. Yudin, directors of the communist cell in the Institute of Red Philosophers, then young men who were, and have remained, philosophically illiterate. Mechanism was said to be a right-wing deviation and the theoretical foundation of the *kulak* agents within the party, of leading to economism and to such revisionist doctrines as the neo-Kantian additions to Marxism. The Deborinists, on the other hand, were accused of over-emphasising leaps (just as the mechanists had over-emphasised evolutionary continuity) and of thus giving ideological support to Trotsky's 'left-wing deviation', or Menshevising idealism. They had taken over the Hegelian dialectic without transforming it into a materialist dialectic, they had separated form and content, they had taken from Plekhanov his erroneous criticism of Lenin's copy-theory of knowledge, and his Feuerbachian attempt to solve the subject-object relation in epistemology in purely metaphysical terms without regard to historical and revolutionary reality. Above all,

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the Deborinists were accused of being 'abstract', of divorcing theory from practice, philosophy from politics. In May 1930, while Yudin was attacking Deborin for holding aloof from the great problems of socialist construction, an article 'by ten authors' in *Under the Banner of Marxism* still insisted that 'the working out of the materialist dialectic is, in fact, the chief service called for *from philosophy* by the class struggle and the construction of socialism'. On 25 January 1931, after a speech by Stalin, the central committee of the Communist Party condemned both mechanism and 'the idealist distortion of Marxism on the part of Comrades Deborin, Karev, Sten, and others'. Deborin recanted, admitting in the subsequent discussion at the Communist Academy that he had fallen into the errors of Menshevising idealism and of separating theory from practice, and publicly thanked the central committee and especially Comrade Stalin for having 'restrained him just in time.'[8]

THE decision of January 1931 is acknowledged by all serious historians of Soviet philosophy as marking a crucial dividing line. Professor Bochenski correctly characterises the preceding years (1917–30) as a period of discussion; Soviet writers, since the decisions of the twentieth CPSU congress in 1956, attempt to present it as a period of creative philosophic endeavour amid conditions of democratic discussion, in which the foundations for a Marxist philosophy were laid by means of the critical consideration of various communist views and the intellectual exposure of errors, without recourse to unjustified 'administrative measures' as a means of philosophical criticism. This is simply not true. The struggle between mechanists and Deborinists had all the characteristics of an organisational struggle for hegemony, in which philosophical argument alone was never decisive. The works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin were increasingly appealed to as unchallengeable doctrinal authority; the dictatorship of the proletariat, the greatness and relevance of Marx, and the possibility and superiority of a Marxist materialist science or philosophy, supporting the proletarian revolution and the building of communism, simply could not be questioned. The difference between the 'period of discussion' and the Stalinist philistinism that followed it is simply that the last vestiges of pre-revolutionary traditions and culture had not yet been entirely destroyed by denunciation and terror and by the promotion of new cadres 'who knew not Joseph'. Deborin and Akselrod had been raised in an atmosphere where criticism and learning still counted, they had brought with them a certain intellectual baggage they could not discard; Mitin and Yudin had no such baggage and knew that, in the conditions of a party dictatorship, neither learning nor critical acumen counted in comparison with political shrewdness and willingness to provide what

[8] Surprisingly, Deborin did not fall victim to the subsequent purges, but remained in Moscow until his death a few years ago, taking a modest part in the work of the Academy of Sciences and writing occasional uncontroversial articles on minor philosophical themes.

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the party wanted. In the work of Deborin in the 1920s one can still feel the creative sweep and confidence of a man expressing his own views and working out his own position, as well as a comparative richness of language and subtlety of argument shaped in conditions in which discussion was still serious and intelligent. In the succeeding period, these qualities were to disappear entirely from Soviet philosophical writing, which took on the style and mentality of the petty bureaucrat.

After the decree of 25 January 1931, the course of Soviet philosophy, as Gustav Wetter puts it, 'flows in the narrow channel of officially prescribed opinion'. Stalin is quickly elevated to the fountainhead of all wisdom; controversy is directed solely against bourgeois ideology; internal discussions degenerate into the 'eradication' of heresies or errors.

The leading official philosopher of the 1930s, still active as an official spokesman of Soviet philosophy at recent international congresses, was Mark Borisovich Mitin. On specifically philosophical questions, the new official philosophy remained close to the positions that had been preached by Deborin against the mechanists. The status and importance of philosophy as a discipline continued to be upheld. Soviet philosophers continued to insist that phenomena of higher orders could not be reduced to those of lower orders. The law of the conflict, interpenetration, and strife of opposites was maintained as a fundamental law of dialectics distinguishing 'true' Marxist philosophy from vulgar mechanistic materialism, but in practice it was interpreted in a less Hegelian spirit. (Even today, Deborin's main error is given as lying in his 'formalism' and his undervaluing of Lenin as a philosopher, not in any concrete philosophical doctrine.)

The main difference between the new movement and Deborinism was one of spirit rather than of dogma. The new philosophers made themselves entirely subservient to the day-to-day requirements of party policies; they gave the impression that there was only one creative philosopher in the Soviet Union, Josif Stalin. In his book *Dialectical Materialism* (Moscow, 1933), Mitin wrote: 'The further advancement of Marxist-Leninist theory, in every department, including that of the philosophy of Marxism, is associated with the name of Comrade Stalin. In all Comrade Stalin's practical achievements, and in all his writings, there is set forth the whole experience of the world-wide struggle of the proletariat, the whole rich store-house of Marxist-Leninist theory.' The main effort went into making up for the lack of official textbooks and into revising textbooks that had been made 'out of date' by new denunciations and shifts in the party line. Mitin and Razumovsky published their two-volume textbook on dialectical and historical materialism, and other textbooks and monographs started coming off the presses laying down the 'correct' Marxist view on various philosophical questions.

In 1936 there was another about-turn. The new Stalin Constitution adopted in that year was claimed to mark the end of the period of the

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construction of socialism. Socialism had now been achieved; there was much talk of socialist legality, of the creative role of socialist law, of the rights and importance of human personality, etc. The philosophical works published by Mitin and his colleagues between 1931 and 1935 were suddenly said to be abstract and scholastic in presentation, and politically illiterate, i.e. they mentioned the writings of Trotsky and Zinoviev, about to be finally exposed at the Moscow trials. Mitin hastened to acknowledge his errors and to promise to follow the party line on the philosophical front. No action was taken against him. But the effect of the purges of 1936–38, of the atmosphere of terror that swept over the Soviet Union, followed by the terribly destructive years of war, was to reduce the volume of philosophical output almost to nil, and to remove any incentive for independent or original work even within the narrow confines of the new Stalinist philosophy. As part of entering upon the era of socialism the Communist Academy was incorporated into the Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Philosophy was considerably enlarged and placed under the direction of V. V. Adoratsky and Mitin. A collectively written history and a so-called dictionary of philosophy were issued, but generally there was little work and virtually no original work of even minor significance done after 1936. In 1944, at the height of the war effort, the central committee complained of shortcomings in the work done by philosophers, but in the same breath criticised 'serious errors' in the just published third volume of the *History of Philosophy*, such as passing over in silence the reactionary attitudes of Hegel, his nationalism, and his deification of the Germans as a chosen people.

Stalin himself was of course exempt from direct pressure and criticism and the fear of terror. His works had to be treated as authoritative by Soviet philosophers and also as displaying, on every occasion, unparalleled signs of genius. His short pamphlet on *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (1938), initially published as part of *The History of the CPSU* (*Short Course*), was hailed by Mitin as a 'creation . . . marking an epoch in the development of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and of world historical significance'. To the professional philosopher there is not one sentence in Stalin's work that displays any philosophical competence or insight or directly raises questions of philosophical interest. Even to the political theorist Stalin is a specimen rather than a colleague.

With the end of the war, philosophical activity in the Soviet Union received a powerful new impulse. In 1946 it was decreed that logic should be taught in all higher educational institutions and that a sufficient number of specialists should be trained for this purpose by the universities. At the same time, however, the stress on partisanship was re-emphasised. *The History of Western European Philosophy*, by one of the leading Soviet philosophers, G. F. Aleksandrov, was suddenly denounced in a personal intervention by Stalin's Minister for Culture, Zhdanov, as displaying the vice of 'bourgeois objectivism'. Before an

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audience of 90 leading 'workers in philosophical science' from all over the Soviet Union, brought together on the initiative of the central committee in June 1947, Zhdanov criticised Aleksandrov's work for the abstract neutrality of its style, for its failure to show Marxism as a revolutionary and qualitative leap in the history of philosophy, for not linking philosophical ideas with the material conditions of life, and especially for omitting Russian philosophy and thus giving tacit support to the 'bourgeois' belittlement of Russian philosophy and the 'bourgeois' distinction between western and eastern culture. Zhdanov went on to say that Stalin was dissatisfied with the timidity, abstractness, and laziness of Soviet philosophers. The time for more serious expansion of philosophical work had come. The philosophers agreed. Aleksandrov recanted and promised to try to do better work.

There is some disagreement among western writers whether the revival of Soviet philosophical discussion is best dated from 1947, from the death of Stalin in March 1953 and the advent of a less tyrannical 'collective leadership', or from the twentieth congress in 1956. The truth of the matter is that a number of factors making for philosophical improvement had begun to build up in the latter part of Stalin's regime, but could not make themselves fully operative before Stalin's death. The 1920s and even the early 1930s had been periods of educational 'crash programmes', designed to maximise literacy and basic skills. By the late 1930s, a more stable educational system producing more seriously trained people had emerged, but its impact on Soviet society was interrupted by purges and total and destructive war. The early post-war period had to undertake once again an enormous expansion of education, but this time at a much higher level. The demand now was not for literacy, but for more jurists, more teachers, more scientists, more administrators. Soviet society had become more sophisticated, the number of people capable of reading serious work had enormously increased. In 1916 there were some 90 institutions of higher learning in Russia; by 1959 there were 770, including 40 universities. There are now over two million full-time or correspondence students of tertiary institutions, compared with some 200,000 in any year of the 1920s. The old Bolshevik, with his universal ideology, and the party boss, are giving way to a more pragmatic and professional generation of specialists.

THE post-war movement of Soviet society towards the ethos of advanced industrial civilisation also has its effects on the position of philosophy and ideological work in Marxist-Leninist dogma. In the 1920s and early 1930s the dialectic had been seen primarily as a weapon of criticism, connected with class struggle, and historical materialism had been used to stress the dependence of everything on economic change and economic progress. From 1936 onwards, however, Stalin had turned to converting the dialectic into the basis for a stable ideology for the regime. Its task now was not to sharpen class struggle but to help

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create consensus. The economic reductionism implicit in the materialist interpretation of history was therefore modified. In 1938, in his *On Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, Stalin had emphasised the capacity of the ideological superstructure for reacting back on the base; in 1950, in his *Marxism and Questions of Linguistics*, he went further and stressed the comparative independence of the ideological superstructure, insisting that some cultural phenomena, such as language, transcended class divisions and were therefore ideologically neutral. The pamphlet opened up the way for the study of formal logic as the ideologically neutral—though abstract and static—laws of thought.

The discussions of 1947 marked the beginning of a period of renewed philosophical activity. The Soviet Union's only continuous philosophical journal, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, had ceased publication in 1944. In 1947, the journal *Voprosy filosofii* was launched as a bi-annual; by 1957 it was a monthly. A second philosophical journal, *Filosofskie nauki*, published by the Philosophy Faculty in Moscow State University, has appeared since 1958. The series comprising the *Bulletin* of the same University has been expanded and made more specialist; philosophy, formerly put together with economics and law, is about to issue its own *Bulletin*. The number of philosophical books published annually was quadrupled in a decade and continues to grow; the number of post-graduate students in philosophy has risen correspondingly.

Two issues have to be separated here, although they are closely related. The quantitative growth in philosophical work unquestionably dates from the last years of Stalin's regime, from the combined effect of his growing concern with ideology as a means of stabilisation and of the growth in technical and general education leading to increased specialisation and more post-graduate studies. Specialisation under Stalin, however, was not accompanied by relaxation of political control. The party remained active arbiter on the most detailed philosophical and scientific questions. In 1946, statisticians were condemned and in part purged for basing their work on the mathematical laws of large numbers and not on Marxist-Leninist dialectics; in 1948, orthodox genetics was condemned in favour of the Michurin-Lysenko belief in the heritability of acquired characteristics, and philosophers of science were still attacking the theory of relativity as being based on 'subjective idealism'. This, too, was the period in which the achievements of Russian materialism, grossly distorted and over-valued, were set up as superior to the philosophic tradition of the West.

The death of Stalin brought two new elements into this renewed philosophical activity. Within a year laudatory references to Stalin as a philosophical genius had disappeared from the journals and demands for a certain respect for professional competence and integrity began to be heard. At the 1956 party congress, Khrushchev inaugurated the campaign for liquidating the cult of personality in Soviet cultural life. In 1961, at the twenty-second congress, Stalin's errors, including the error of dogmatically laying down positions in fields in which he was not

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competent, were exposed to the world. This was an important trend, within the limits of ultimate party control, towards permitting professional discussion without the threat of political punishment for taking wrong sides. By 1958, the philosopher, P. N. Fedoseyev, was emphasising the importance of concrete analysis in philosophy and the impropriety of importing methods appropriate to the struggle against hostile ideology into scholarly discussions. This qualitative improvement of Soviet philosophy is more striking after 1955 than after 1947.

The trend towards professionalisation and professional integrity in Soviet philosophical discussion has been accompanied by some important surrenders on the part of dogma. In 1955, discussions on the philosophy of science led to the acceptance of the theory of relativity as fully compatible, in its physical formulations, with the doctrines of dialectical materialism—it was taken to confirm the *diamat* view that geometry is a branch of physics, that space and time cannot be abstracted from matter, and that matter is not inert material but can also be energy. In these discussions the leading Soviet philosophers identified with the attack on relativity, A. A. Maksimov, and R. Ya. Steinman, together with the anti-relativity physicist, I. V. Kuznetsov, were branded as reactionary. The following year, cybernetics (previously condemned as a bourgeois pseudo-science) was accepted as the science of computers, bringing out certain important analogies with human thinking. In connection with this the development of mathematical logic and the truth-table technique were accepted by an increasing number of Soviet philosophers—a development culminating in the decision by the Moscow University Philosophy Faculty in 1966 to accept Professor I. S. Narsky's recommendation that the Department of Logic in the Faculty confine itself to teaching formal and mathematical (symbolic) logic, and that the teaching of dialectical logic be split off from it.

These developments have produced a new atmosphere in considerable areas of Soviet philosophy. There is now a great deal of emphasis on problems within dialectical materialism—the relation of formal and dialectical logic, the philosophy of physics, the relationship and co-ordination of the categories of dialectical materialism and so on. A growing volume of publications on these questions is being put out by university presses in small editions of seven to ten thousand copies, thus ensuring that the book can claim to be technical. The standard argument in such works is still by way of deduction from unquestioned fundamental principles of dialectical materialism, or from Lenin, whose philosophical writings have taken on a specially canonical character since the rejection of Stalin and the alleged return to Leninist norms. There is now a great deal of new nonsense in low-level Soviet philosophical teaching about the 'Leninist stage' in the history of philosophy, the philosophical critique of religion, epistemology, etc., but even the use of doctrinal authorities is now comparatively intelligent and increasingly looks to the context and spirit in which the cited pronouncements are made.

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There has been official rejection of the 'nihilistic' denial of the value of the history of philosophy, of 'improper' attacks on 'objectivism', of the 'incorrect' over-evaluation of the role of Russian philosophy and of 'false' conceptions that the philosophy of Marxism did not build on previous achievements. There has been increasing interest in philosophers who do not fall into the simple class materialist or idealist—e.g. Aristotle, Kant, and Hegel—and greater willingness to distinguish *within* non-Marxist trends. Above all, pressure from professional philosophers has led to the previously unthinkable publication of Russian editions of non-materialist philosophers, such as a two-volume edition of Hume (the first since the Revolution), and editions of Kant and Plato. The new *History of Philosophy* in six volumes, the new *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, not yet completed, and the *Philosophical Dictionary* published in 1963, all display enormous improvement in range, technicality, and fairness of entries. The serious unabusive tone of K. S. Bakradze's book on contemporary 'bourgeois' philosophy, of A. S. Bogomolov's studies in 'bourgeois' theories of evolution (leading him to his recent plea in *Voprosy filosofii* that Soviet philosophers should take account of the contributions to dialectic made by non-Marxists since Hegel's time), and of B. V. Biriukov's studies on Frege, reflect a new and expanding trend in Soviet professional philosophy. They have no parallel in Soviet philosophy under Stalin.

The really important change in Soviet philosophy, then, is the change symbolised by various discussions in 1955, presaging the rejection of Stalinist dogmatism in philosophy. It draws on increasing professionalisation and a comparative liberalisation, similar to those that made philosophy possible as an academic discipline after 1863, once the spirit of Nicholas I had been got out of the way. It is a period of the disintegration of ideology and of a new specialisation, so far entirely parasitic on the West. Fifty years of Bolshevism, in finally producing a comparatively stable and industrialised society, in relaxing political controls, and in once more permitting limited intercourse with the West, have brought philosophy back to a level of competence somewhere near that of the 1890s and 1900s. One can only hope that it can now continue to improve. To expect the cultural liberation promised by the February Revolution would, so far, be premature.

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THE PEASANT

Basile Kerblay

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT is an abstraction. The real peasants are of very varying types: there are the forest-dwellers, whose scattered izbas form villages beside lakes or in forest-clearings; there are the black-earth cultivators, living in dense clusters of white-washed huts; and there are the young colonists of the Virgin Lands, whose prefabricated maisonettes, of factory-worker's rather than of kolkhoz type, are leased to them on credit. But the problem is how to approach them, since foreigners can neither choose where they will travel nor whom they will talk to. One is left with the dull files of official statements and statistics, and very fortunately also some literary essays of good quality, and the sections of the press devoted to rural affairs, and a few sociological investigations. With their aid, one may attempt a portrait—doubtless incomplete—of the Russian peasantry, whose habitual taciturnity keeps them little known and whose labour and heroism, which weave the fabric of the country's history, make them sympathetic.

* * *

SMOKE AT DAYBREAK above the tin roof is the sign that the peasant housewife has stoked up her stove. Not long ago, the peasants were reluctant to abandon their thatched roofs which caught fire so easily. 'They'll class me as a *barin* and refuse me relief when there's a famine. . . . They'll take me for a kulak and seize my house!' The izba made itself as humble as possible during the disturbed times. Today it is becoming healthier, freed from parasites and from the smaller livestock that used to be kept there. There is a brick foundation between the soil and the wooden frame of the house (50 per cent of the houses are of wood throughout).[1] The windows are larger. Sometimes, with a verandah on one side to please the town-dweller who will rent it in the summer, it has the appearance of a dacha. Since 1945, one family in three has rebuilt its house.[2]

Locked and bolted behind its paling, the dvor has shrunk. The stable is empty. The hayloft and shed no longer receive the harvest of the four hectares which were the average family holding in 1917[3]: in the RSFSR the kitchen-garden orchard has shrunk to 0·30 hectares. But the peasant's wife gives less time to work in the kolkhoz than to this little patch of land, which has to be continually dug, watered, manured—there is still a cow (in 1960 there were 37 per cent of kolkhoz families without a cow; in 1917 22 per cent of the peasants had no cow)—and to her housework and

[1] A. Zaltsman, ed., *Zhilishchnoe stroitelstvo v SSSR* (Moscow, 1962), p. 197.
[2] *Vestnik Statistiki*, 1966, no. 8, p. 42.
[3] A. Anfimov, *Rossiiskaya derevnya v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow, 1962).

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livestock. Today, as yesterday, the peasant woman's day is long, because the men have left (there is only one man to every two women in the over-thirty-five age groups).

The village day begins with the clinking of pails at the pump or the well. More than 60 per cent of families still do their baking at home.[4] The stove with its oven is no longer in the corner of the old single living room, but has moved to the centre so as to give space for several rooms. The old people sleep by the stove; the young have taken to beds. In the further room, whose windows give on to the street, chairs and cupboard have replaced benches and chests. In the show corner, nearly half the houses still display ikons. Potted greenery, prints, gaudy advertisements, and photographs on the wall give the room a style—out of date, but touchingly eloquent of the desire not to be 'looked down on', to become 'somebody', to possess 'culture'. 61 per cent of kolkhoz houses are lit by electricity.[5]

The number of families has been maintained, but their size has decreased from 5·9 members (1897), to 4·9 (1926), to 3·6 (1959). The breaking-up of large families was encouraged by the agrarian reform and the statute of the artel, because each separate household was entitled to a plot. And then the new jobs created by industrialisation attracted 40 million peasants from the villages between 1926 and 1964. The 1966 rural population (107·1 millions) is about the same as that of 1897 (106·7 millions); in other words, the population increase between those two dates has been entirely absorbed by the towns or in wars.

The size of the average family increased from 3·6 to 3·9 persons if we include those members temporarily absent in the army, on construction work, or away at school.[6] The number of dependants has considerably decreased: 0·8 for each active member, as against 1·3 in 1917. Nevertheless, when it is a case of young children this is no light burden for the peasant housewife. (In the country, 5 per cent of children under three are looked after in creches.) In town and country alike, the *babushka* is irreplaceable. In the winter she returns, for economy, to her children's izba: there is always wood to be collected, because the steppe is niggardly of fuel. There are 9 million country folk, of whom 5 million are elderly, who have no other occupation than their private plot, and the women with children do very little work on the kolkhoz.

By this miniature farming the family insures itself against the lean years when the kolkhoz can only make threats or promises. In spite of the substantial rise in agricultural prices since 1953, wages paid by the kolkhoz represent only 29 per cent of the family's money income. The rest is made up by 'external' wages, by allocations and pensions (before 1964 kolkhoz members reaching pensionable age received 5 old rubles a month; the present government announces 16 new rubles a month), and

[4] *Ekon. Gazeta*, 27 January 1965.
[5] I. Ryzhenko, *Razvitie selskoy elektrifikatsii* (Moscow, 1965), p. 186.
[6] *Vestnik Statistiki*, 1961, no. 11, p. 93.

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above all by sales of his produce in urban and rural markets (628 NR per kolkhoz family, or a little more than half the mean annual wages of urban workers). As in all peasant economies, revenue in kind continues to play an important role.[7]

In the same village the material situation of a family may vary as between 1 and 7, according to the number of mouths to be fed, the number of working hands, and the type of occupation (cow-woman, book-keeper, etc., full-time employees and seasonal worker in the fields). The variation was about the same when Lenin was writing *Razvitie Kapitalizma v Rossii*. Until now, their principal concern has been the uncertainty, except for certain privileged categories, about the amount of remuneration paid out by the kolkhozes at the end of the year. In principle, from 1 July 1966 everyone should be guaranteed a minimum salary of 1·72 rubles for a day's work (average of 199 days per active worker in 1962).[8]

But the young have not waited. They preferred a regular wage in construction works or jobs in a town; those trained for mechanised agriculture have become crane-drivers. Without its young the village has become a quiet place. How can a girl hope to get married? There is nothing 'romantic' about being a cow-girl; so in order 'to become somebody' one must leave the kolkhoz. One comes back for the shooting, or to help one's old mother repair the izba.

The rural schools, although there are a great many inter-village boarding-schools, do not offer equal opportunities for proceeding to an institution of higher learning. Should one blame the teacher, who has often to devote more free time to his farm than to stimulating his pupils? Or is it the fault of the older generation, which does not always understand the point of science and fashions of the town, and has often been disappointed by hasty 'innovations'. 'So long as there's enough rain, why do we need an agricultural expert?'

* * *

IT WOULD BE UNJUST, in spite of the persistence of alcoholism due to clandestine distilling, to describe the people who stay on the land as 'boors', the 'dark people'. The peasant is no longer analphabetic (literacy rose from 21 per cent in 1897 to 50·6 per cent in 1926 and to 98·2 per cent in 1959). And the village is not so isolated as it used to be. The roads leave a lot to be desired, being kept up by compulsory fatigue parties (4 to 6 days for each active kolkhoz member): 78 per cent of the roads in the RSFSR are simple earth tracks. Liaison with the town is slow and irregular. Two families out of three possess a bicycle; the great affairs of national life are made familiar to all through radio

[7] G. Slesarev, *Metodologiya sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya problem narodonaseleniya SSSR* (Moscow, 1965), p. 82; B. Rakitsky, *Obshchestvennye fondy potreblenii* (Moscow, 1966), p. 90; Yu. Arutiunyan, in *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1966, no. 5.

[8] *Puty povysheniya proizvoditelnosti truda v selskom khoziaistve SSSR* (Moscow, 1964), p. 63.

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and TV (in 1962, 7 per cent of families possessed their own set).[9] Frequent journeys are necessary for marketing, shopping, business, and, for those in responsible positions, meetings. The competence of the rural soviet is very restricted, and important matters are dealt with at the centre of the *raion*. The village shop keeps only a small selection of groceries, drapery, and clothing; anything further must come from the town (60 per cent of the customers at Moscow's GUM are from outside the town).

Craftsmen, who are now rare in the country, work in flying squads wherever they are well paid. The priest, where there still is one, keeps in the background. The professional middleman and the money-lender of the old days have definitely disappeared.

The new notables are the 'gentlemen who go about in cars': the inspectors, who are seen everywhere at harvest time and who badger the village chairman. For the peasant, this latter is the arbiter of good or bad fortune. He has a delicate task: to conciliate the irreconcilable, that is to say, the requirements of the plan and the 'directives', with the caprices of nature and the idiosyncracies of the land; to retain the confidence of the authorities who have nominated him, and also the respect of his 'own' people, while resisting the plausible *babas* who come with tearful stories; to obtain forage, construction materials, spare parts in short supply, by any and every means and without resorting to illegal practices. But many village chairmen are not so scrupulous; they are on the make and alert to switch jobs at the right moment. They are '*from outside*' and the village is only a stage in their career. The kolkhoz brigadier, on the other hand, is '*one of us*'; he is acquainted with everyone's troubles and weaknesses.

The village is no longer an autonomous centre as it used to be. It has been grouped with other villages—not always to their enthusiasm—to be fused into the gigantic administrative entity of the present kolkhozes and sovkhozes. As a result, the village community has become diluted. Country dwellers are still very dispersed: the average population of a rural locality in 1959 was 154 as against 198 in 1926. Attempts at concentration (agro-towns) were impeded by the peasant's attachment to his individual house as well as financial obstacles. The richer villages are proud of their House of Culture, whose architecture sometimes recalls the rather heavy style of the former *usadbas*, and it is there that the cultural and social life of the younger generation is centred.

The old church has been closed and transformed into a workshop or shed; but the graveyard is still in use and nearly all the tombs are surmounted by crosses. Survival of faith, or precautionary measure against the beyond? The traditional feasts are preserved, and also certain rites at funerals, births, and weddings (of which 10 per cent are religious). These celebrations, like the civil ones, are always the occasion for feasting and drinking, and they would not be complete without the

[9] *Pravda*, 17 May 1962, 22 August 1962; *Izvestiya*, 26 October 1966.

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accordion player and the parade of girls and youths, whose laughter and song continue far into the night.

* * *

> Rich towns grow more and more numerous, magnificent stores and buildings are raised, railways are built, all kinds of machines and improvements are introduced in industry and in agriculture too, and yet there are millions of men still deep in poverty and obliged to work all their lives simply to support their families. . . . The peasant without a horse possesses nothing. He is a proletarian. . . . The peasant without a horse can do nothing with the land. . . . Indirect taxes do not come from the land or from its development. They are paid indirectly by the people in the form of commodity prices. The state taxes sugar, alcohol, petrol, matches, and other articles of consumption. . . .
>
> There are at present far fewer schools in the country than in the towns. . . . But what we need is a genuine free education, and not what the officials and the priests desire . . . everyone ought to have full liberty to profess the religion of his choice, and also to propagate or to change it. . . . Just as the peasants were the land-owner's slaves, so the whole Russian people is still enslaved to officials. Under serfdom the peasants were deprived of civil liberty, and today the Russian people is deprived of political liberty. . . . The muzhik is like an infant: he may not take a single step unless the authorities permit! He is as dependent as a slave. . . . Passports must be abolished . . . the land must be worked in common, by agreement, by workers who appoint men whom they trust as supervisors, and using every kind of machine to lighten the work, so as to be able to work in teams for no more than eight or even six hours a day. . . . And there must be no officials to come poking their noses into the peasants' collective business. . . . The commune today is not a freely consented but an administrative union.

Those lines were written in 1903; they were addressed by Lenin '*To the impoverished peasants*'. They are not quoted here for the sake of the ironic contrast, always so devastating, between proclaimed ideals and ensuing action, nor in order to bring out the ambiguity of changes whose real importance, on the contrary, our previous pages have tried to show. The problem is to find the reasons for a certain continuity of evolution, where it still appears, in spite of revolutions. We will confine ourselves to three permanent factors—industrialisation, the nature of the peasant economy, the organisation of the peasantry—which the doctrine and practice of the past 50 years have stamped with their particular mark.

Industrialisation and the peasant

Industrialisation began to 'take off' a generation before the October revolution. In Russia as elsewhere the peasant class was the source of the capital which was allotted by priority to other purposes than the modernisation of the countryside. Already under the old regime taxation and debt compelled the peasant to sell his surplus, which was bought

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up cheap by the merchants and sold at competitive prices in other markets.

This 'primitive accumulation' was perfected when collectivisation made it possible to eliminate the agricultural market completely and to oblige the peasant to supply the State with an increasing volume of agricultural products without regard to real costs or to harvest fluctuations. Up to 1957 more than half the total of grain crops had to be delivered without money payment. As a result, peasant consumption was kept down for several decades to a very low level (see table below). Today it is rising again, but the psychological traces of this new form of serfdom are not completely effaced: work in the kolkhoz is assimilated by many to military service ('I have served my time').

Produce available to meet country demand and for home consumption
(millions of tons)

1939 frontiers	*Grain crops*	*Meat and fats*
1919–13	48·8	18·4
1926	66·3	22·7
1933–37	43·5	14·8
1938–40	43·9	18·6
1945 frontiers		
1909–13	55·3	22
1949–53	53	23·5
1954–58	64·2	28·5

The new regime has not only speeded the industrialisation of agriculture —which has done far more than the partition of land to deal with rural overpopulation—but it has also influenced in its own way the direction of the process. For Marxists, of course, there is no difference in kind between agriculture and industry. It was on the model of heavy industry that the land was re-equipped and huge agricultural concerns established (the sovkhoz 'Giant' in the Sal'sk steppes already in 1929 included 59,000 hectares of land under grain crops): there's progress for you! And progress in agriculture derives from industry: yesterday the tractor and the lorry, fertilizers today. But have one-and-a-half million tractors sufficed to modify the peasants' mentality?

The nature of the peasant economy

The power, the purposes, and the needs of the Soviet peasantry are rooted in the family, and that is why it survived the trials of the bad times—wars and impositions—as formerly it had survived the recruiting officers and tax-collectors. It is upon the perennial family institution that the continuity of peasant civilisation is based, and from it the muzhik draws his vitality. The family is his overriding concern, and he is attached to his horse and livestock because it is animals which ensure the fertility of the soil by which his family survives. He works without stint, never reckoning the hours spent on his own land, and will travel

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long distances, at need, to earn the extras which his farm has failed to provide.

This familial character of the peasant economy has been badly understood by Marxists. Lenin had been right, no doubt, in his demonstration that the Russian peasant community was disintegrating at the end of the nineteenth century, under the influence of the market economy. By a process of natural selection the less fit were abandoning agriculture, and there was already appearing, with help from the zemstvos and from Stolypin's reform, a class of more enterprising and enlightened peasants. A small minority had modernised their work in a sense which could be described as 'capitalist'.

This tendency was broken by the Revolution. In spite of the NEP, tendencies towards social differentiation were nullified in favour of the peasant subsistence economy. The family withdrew into itself, finding little outside to encourage it. A few tried to make up, by leasing land or intensifying production, for the loss of income due to unfavourable terms of trade; but the standards by which it was found possible to stigmatise some of them as the class enemy, or kulak, appear today very questionable.[10]

By naively assimilating peasant economy to capitalist economy, the regime exaggerated the kulak danger and, in so doing, partly helped to create it, through taxation and arbitrary levies. The effects of this lack of understanding have been durable: To begin with, the most active elements, in whom was concentrated the technical skills of traditional agriculture, were eliminated. 'They have cut off the wings of the fields.'[11] And then the small farm, instead of gradually disappearing or else evolving, as elsewhere, towards more rational methods, was statically fixed by the statute of the artel. The precarious survival of family farming in the very midst of the collectives was to create a permanent tension which still today accounts for the low productivity of collective agriculture in spite of mechanisation.

On the other hand, the peasant family economy has lost one of its old sources of strength: its independence. The head of the family is no longer, as he used to be, the sole authority; he now works 'outside' the family, as a workman. But not like other workmen: he had to wait until 1964 for the promise of a pension and until 1966 for a guaranteed wage. Was this long delay due to the weakness of peasant organisation?

The organisation of the peasantry

Foreigners (such as Haxthausen) were often interested in the organisation of the Russian peasant community. Marx himself considered the possibilities of this primitive form of socialism. But the countryside's reception of the socialist ideas propagated by idealistic students and terrorists was always lukewarm. The worst heritage of serfdom was not

[10] M. Lewin, 'Who was the Soviet Kulak?' *Soviet Studies*, October 1966
[11] Stadniuk, 'Liudi ni angeli', *Neva*, 1965, no. 8, p. 37.

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so much the peasant '*otrezki*' or debt as it was this passive submission of the peasant to his destiny.[12] The peasants could never assert themselves except by convulsive insurrection, and their sense of political organisation never got beyond the stage of banditry. Except in war-time, the peasants' contact with the rest of the nation was always indirect, through persons acting as 'intermediaries': that is to say, administrative officials devoted to the government and appointed by it. But with cooperative agriculture, which very quickly began to flourish, new perspectives seemed to be opening.

The country districts were markedly slower than the towns in reacting to the revolutions of February and October 1917; and in so far as they moved, it was to restore to the community lands which had been detached from it, rather than to accept the ideals of the bolsheviks. The anti-religious campaign, which had been expected to be a liberating influence, in fact prejudiced the mass of peasants against the 'Godless'. There was also, however, after 1917 a radical current which tended to produce strictly communist ways of life in the first communes.

But these communes, like the great mass of peasants incorporated in the agrarian societies (*zemlnye obshchestva*) showed their preference for an atomic system of independent communities.[13] The profound group solidarity which was the strength of these little communities, on the local level, left them side by side and unassociated, so that they were unable to defend their rights on the national level; their fate was settled in the towns, where there was no one to speak on their behalf.

The bolsheviks had little sympathy for the peasant cooperation directed by the Social-Revolutionaries, or for the anarchistic forms of communism. And when the kulak danger was feared, cooperation became even more suspect. The purges of the 1930s spared neither the kulaks nor the leaders of cooperation who had been, in the zemstvos, the most devoted and enlightened modernisers of the Russian countryside.[14]

Since then the public powers have always held in the greatest suspicion any movement not controlled by the central authorities. The party's weakness in the country has been a heavy obstacle to freedom at the base. Recently, however, the kolkhozes have been allowed to go outside the strict agricultural limits within which they had been confined, and it has been possible to set up inter-kolkhoz enterprises on a regional level. There is a project for kolkhozes to be federated in a 'Union' on the model of the consumers' cooperatives. There are some who would entrust them with complete responsibility for the administration of agriculture; but many others are hesitant about conferring such extensive rights upon *elected* bodies and would prefer to give them purely 'social' functions like those of the trade unions. Will the next, and eagerly

[12] B. Kerblay, 'La réforme de 1861 et ses effets sur la vie rurale . . .' in *Le Statut des paysans libérés du servage* (Paris, 1963).
[13] D. J. Male, 'The Village Community in the USSR 1925-30', *Soviet Studies*, January 1963; R. G. Wesson, *Soviet Communes* (Rutgers University Press, 1963).
[14] B. Kerblay, 'A. V. Chayanov, un carrefour dans l'évolution de la pensée agraire . . .' in *Cahiers du monde russe et Soviétique*, October-December 1964.

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awaited, congress of kolkhozes break the official grip and allow the peasant the full 'coming of age' which he claims? 'What is the use of an agricultural expert, if he gets his orders from the secretary of the raion?'

* * *

ONE IS INCLINED TO FORECAST for Soviet agriculture an evolution on the same lines as that of other industrial countries. Past experience cannot be reversed and it leads forward into the future.

A number of tendencies can already be discerned, some of them still only latent. The most decisive is the technical progress which, in the USSR as elsewhere, is altering the foundations of traditional peasant civilisation. The muzhik's experience and intuition, the importance attached to soil and to draught-animals, are giving place to the laboratory, the geneticist, the soil chemist, and the tractor.

These technological changes are heavy with social, political, and economic implications. First of all, they call for an increasing professionalisation of agriculture, though the movement in this direction has been slow up to now in the USSR (according to the 1959 census, 29 million peasants, out of 33 million, had received no real specialised training; less than 10 per cent of the active rural population and 3 per cent of kolkhoz members had secondary or higher education, as against 17 per cent in the towns). With the present disparity of living standards between town and country it is difficult to get specialists to settle in the country. An immense effort of rural development is required.

Further, there should follow from the professionalisation of agriculture a new kind of relationship between country and town. No longer the member of a 'class' but of a profession, the agricultural worker should be granted, like the industrial technician, the status and complete range of rights for which he is at present obliged to haggle. Claims are being put forward for the right of autonomous decision by the kolkhozes and sovkhozes, for an agricultural market, and for free circulation of produce.[15] Doubtless the appearance of agricultural surpluses merely shifts the problems of agriculture from the sphere of production to that of marketing; it entails the same reforms for agriculture as for the industries producing consumer goods. The relations between agriculture and the other sectors (industry and trade) will be harmonised, and the frontiers may even become blurred in a vertical concentration of certain branches of production.

Must one then foresee the end of the peasantry?

For a long time yet the Russian countryside will be, as elsewhere, the reservoir for the residual population which cannot be absorbed, for lack of sufficient training, by the expanding industries. Agriculture will play to the full the role of relief channel or safety valve. But it will

[15] V. G. Venzher, in *Proizvodstvo, nakoplenie, potreblenie* (Moscow, 1965); G. Lisichkin, in *Novy Mir*, 1965, no. 9.

(*continued on p. 168*)

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PLANNING WITHOUT THEORY 1917-1967

Leon Smolinski

On s'engage—et puis on voit

THE question in Russia in 1917 was not: plan or no plan. Differences of opinion existed only with respect to the scope of the national economic plan and the methods of its implementation. Between the two revolutions of 1917, the Bolsheviks had a well-defined position with respect to power and property relationships. As regards economic planning, however, the initiative lay clearly with the Mensheviks. It was at the insistence of a group of Menshevik economists led by V. G. Groman that the country's 'second government', the Petrograd City Soviet, passed its famous resolution of 16 May 1917 sounding a clarion call for a centrally planned economy.

'The time has come for the national economy to start working according to targets set for it by the government, to work under the government's control and even under its direction.' The state was to monopolise trade in some (mainly agricultural) products, to set up compulsory cartels in key branches of industry, while 'for almost all industries the government must take part in the allocation of raw materials, distribution of product and price fixing'. It should also assume control of all financial institutions and of the labour market. To carry out these tasks, the Soviet resolved 'to create agencies which would implement a planned regulation of the economic process':[1] an Economic Council and a Chief Economic Committee which would be attached to the Provisional Government as, respectively, a deliberative and an executive body. The rationale for this programme of action was succinctly stated by V. G. Groman, whom Sukhanov credits with being 'to a very great extent' its author: 'Both the country and the government lack an economic brain. It has to be created'.[2]

The Social-Revolutionary Party and the Bolsheviks had remarkably little to say about economic planning at their last pre-October congresses, except for agreeing on the need for an economic plan. The acceptance of economic planning and central direction of the economy was by no means limited to socialist parties. In his extremely interesting memorandum dated 8 June 1917, the head of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, V. A. Stepanov, a Kadet, revealed that his ministry was then engaged in working out an economic plan for Russia, which would *inter alia* set government investment quotas in various sectors. He favoured the extension of 'the principle of government

[1] Petrogradskii sovet rabochikh deputatov, *Protokoly zasedanii ispolnitelnogo komiteta i biuro* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), pp. 147–49.
[2] Ibid. p. 333; Sukhanov, N., *Zapiski o revoliutsii* (Berlin, 1923), II, pp. 73–74.

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regulation of economic life' into the postwar period, 'until an economic equilibrium is restored'. In times of structural change, he argued, a free play of private interests would lead to economic chaos. As regards the scope of planning, Stepanov wisely wanted to confine government regulation to priority industries. He states an embryonic principle of '*udarnost*': only after meeting the needs of these industries for labour and capital stock could the residuals be allocated to other sectors.

While rejecting outright nationalisation, Stepanov agreed with a compulsory cartellisation of industry, which was a key point in the Bolshevik Party's programme.[3] According to blueprints drawn by a prominent industrialist, L. I. Goldshtaub, all important industries would be organised into 12 government-controlled nationwide cartels under the direction of a central coordinating body. Each cartel would operate according to a plan determining the product mix, prices and maximum profits. This system would embrace all large-scale and medium-size enterprises, could be implemented within a few months, and 'would enable the government to impose a strict control upon Russia's commerce and industry'.[4]

Central planning agencies requested by the Petrograd Soviet were promptly created. At the first meeting of the Economic Council, on 21 July, the then Prime Minister, A. F. Kerensky, 'assigned to [it] as its first task . . . the job of working out a plan for the whole economic and financial life and for the gradual regulation thereof'. Planned regulation of the economy was to be 'extremely rigorous, serious and determined', and 'as far as possible' the government was to submit the drafts of its economic legislative bills to the Council for approval.[5] But the Council never advanced beyond the stage of, to use Sukhanov's term, 'an academic talkathone'. Its executive companion body, headed by prominent businessmen, the Chief Economic Committee (GEK) accomplished more. For example, by 10 August, it had already prepared a draft concerning the methods of construction and implementation of a national supply plan. The plan was ingenious but cumbersome. Thus, for example, a special working commission set up for each commodity was to determine, after a series of coordinating negotiations with other agencies, where and in what amounts the commodity in question was to be manufactured, delivery dates in order of the users' priorities, etc. The GEK saw itself, however, primarily as as executive rather than a planning body, a prototype, in a way, of the VSNKh of 1917–21. In its draft statute submitted for the government's approval, it sought the right to fix prices and wage rates, to direct and coordinate the policies of various existing government agencies in the economic field, to close down business establishments,

[3] 'Zapiska V. A. Stepanova', *Krasny arkhiv*, tom 3 (10) (1925), pp. 86 ff.

[4] Volobuev, P. V., *Ekonomicheskaia politika vremennogo pravitelstva* (Moscow, 1962), pp. 96–98.

[5] Quoted from the minutes by Z. Lozinsky, *Ekonomicheskaia politika vremennogo pravitelstva* (Leningrad, 1929), pp. 56–57.

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sequester their assets and products, remove their administrators. That these proposals were considered too sweeping by the government is shown by such marginal comments on the draft as: 'Quite impossible, this amounts to creating an economic dictator.'[6] Such was hardly the case. The GEK's approach to planning was remarkably democratic and provided for the participation in the planning process of trade unions, municipal agencies and voluntary organisations. This, incidentally, would reduce the amount of information needed by the central planners themselves but would make necessary a strong coordinating body.

Thus, at the time of the October revolution, work on economic planning was going on in various government and non-government agencies. Central direction of economic activity was advocated, but compulsory cartels rather than government ownership of industry were favoured. In the short run, central economic planning was seen primarily as a tool for combating economic chaos and imposing defence priorities upon resource allocation, but it was also to continue into the postwar period. All these projects were strongly influenced by the German experience with wartime planning, as was freely conceded by their authors. As regards the Provisional Government, Prokopovich, its minister of food, admits that what he considered to be the most important decree issued by that government, the law on grain trade monopoly, was almost verbatim translated from German.[7]

For all that, in the Provisional Government's approach to economic planning, projects far outweighed decrees and decrees outweighed action. An operational plan, a strong central planning board, presupposed a strong government which would not be afraid to challenge the vested interests of big business (not all representatives of which were as enlightened as Goldshtaub) and of labour. With its compulsive desire to be liked, the Provisional Government of the intellectuals and by the intellectuals was not cut out for this role. Day by day it was becoming more provisional and less government until the October revolution delivered a *coup de grâce*.

'YOU studied organisational problems of the German economy: syndicates, trusts, banks—take care of these problems in this country too'.[8] This is Iu. Larin's report of how, on the day of the October revolution, Lenin put him informally in charge of reorganising Russia's economy. Larin set promptly to work, designing the system of 'glavkism' and various other institutions. Five years later Lenin was to say that Larin should not be trusted with economic or planning matters[9], but by that time, as Larin himself puts it, his personal

[6] Ibid. pp. 63–64.
[7] Prokopovich, S. N., *Ideia planirovania i itogi piatiletki* (Paris, 1934), p. 43.
[8] Iu. Larin, in: *Narodnoe khoziaistvo*, 1918, No. 11, p. 16.
[9] *XI Sezd RKP (b), Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1961), p. 145.

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biography had become inseparable from the history of the Soviet institutions he had fathered, and some of which, incidentally, survive to this day.

This informal, if not impulsive, approach to the solution of intricate problems of economic planning and organisation was to characterise Lenin on various important occasions. Where these problems are concerned, one looks in vain in Lenin's pre-revolutionary writings for the same clarity, precision, and realism which he exhibited when writing about power and property. Improvisations that were to follow the October revolution were rooted in impatient oversimplications abounding in Lenin's pre-revolutionary works. His ideas in this field can be gathered mainly from the celebrated *State and Revolution* (completed in September 1917) and two pamphlets: *The Impending Catastrophe and how to avert it* (10–14 September 1917), and *Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* (completed 1 October 1917).

In these works Lenin envisages a political dictatorship of the proletariat being established in what remains essentially a market economy. Apart from banking, insurance, transportation, and some large industrial enterprises, business enterprises were to remain in private ownership but under workers' control. Little attention was paid to the growth of production, the emphasis being on a more equitable income distribution, albeit within limits: thus bank deposits were not to be confiscated even if someone should have 15 million rubles deposited in the bank. The state would realise its economic objectives through the regulation of the markets.

What are the main tools for such regulation? In Lenin's opinion, 'banks are the master of production. Socialism is unthinkable without large-scale banking. Only control over the banks, over the core and chief mechanism of capitalist circulation, would enable us to impose real . . . control over the whole economic life'.[10] Hence his recipe for a planned socialist economy: an amalgamation of all banks into 'one gigantic state bank, with branches in each rural community, in each factory—this amounts to nine-tenths of the socialist apparatus'. All that is needed for the creation of this banking leviathan is 'one decree'. Once created, it will establish immediately and effortlessly an accounting of production and distribution of commodities on a national scale.[11]

Lenin's other postulates were: the nationalisation of the existing

[10] Lenin, V. I., *Sochinenia*, 4 ed., XXV, p. 310; XXVI, p. 82, XXV, p. 306.

[11] *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 82. It may be added that Lenin's image of the future planned economy of socialism was to change repeatedly. While in 1917 he saw the State Bank as '9/10 of the socialist apparatus', by May 1918 he came to view the Supreme Council of the National Economy with its regional branches as the only state agency that would preserve 'a firm position' under socialism. By 1919 it was the trade unions that were ultimately to concentrate the whole administration of the economy in their hands. Finally, in 1920 came the formula, Communism equals Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country. Needless to say, neither the State Bank, nor the VSNKh, nor the trade unions, nor for that matter the Soviets, have played the important part assigned to them in these visions of the future.

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cartels, compulsory syndication of all employers, rationing of bread, and compulsory labour duty. The last two measures were hailed as 'the most powerful means of accounting and control . . . more powerful than the guillotine'.

With the institutional framework established, enter the national economic plan. Lenin made clear how he intended to produce one, but not what its contents would be. The plan was to be drawn up and checked by economists, engineers, agronomists, etc., as part of their compulsory labour obligation, under the control of the workers' organisations. Either they would turn out a workable plan, or they would not eat.[12] But what would the plan be about? Did Lenin view it as a model, à la Marx, showing crucial inter-relationships among large economic aggregates? A bill of goods to be produced and the mode of their distribution? A programme of financial and fiscal measures to be taken by the State Bank ('the nine-tenths of the socialist apparatus')? The latter interpretation appears to be most plausible in the light of Lenin's emphasis on banking as the tool of market regulation, but his position, with respect to what a plan is, was to shift sharply a number of times in the years to follow.

One thing is made clear by Lenin's emphatic appeals for national accounting and by his apologia for the all-powerful state bank. Money was to continue being the lifeblood of the new planned economy and planners were to utilise the price system, making their choices on the basis of monetary values rather than in physical terms. Regulated markets were to be the medium through which plans would work themselves out. Very soon, however, Lenin was to advocate the abolition of all markets and money, saying that without these measures it was ridiculous even to speak of socialism. And, as one contemporary observer put it, the very word 'bank' disappeared from the Soviet language.

As regards carrying the plan out and administering the socialist economy in general, the difficulties of this gigantic undertaking were resolutely pooh-poohed. 'This is much easier done than you all think', seems to be the leitmotif of Lenin's 1917 writings on this subject. He blamed Mensheviks for creating extremely complex, cumbersome, bureaucratic planning agencies, and condemned their planning projects as 'bourgeois hare-brained schemes'. He himself held planning to be an exceedingly simple task.

It is puzzling how this genius of political organisation could underestimate the importance of economic organisation in his socialist state. There was no need, he claimed, to stop and think about the organisational scheme of the socialist economy he was about to decree: 'We are going to take it ready-made from capitalists', presumably from the Germans, whose wartime planning was held to be the supreme organisational achievement of the capitalist system. All it would take

[12] Ibid. XXV, pp. 304–305 and XXVI, pp. 84, 93.

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to create and put into operation the mammoth socialist banking system was 'one decree'. Once established, the socialist economy would function according to plan, and managing it would be a simple task. 'Accounting and control . . . have become extremely simplified under capitalism, being reduced to extremely simple operations which can be performed by any literate person: observation and note taking, the knowledge of the four arithmetical operations, and issuing receipts.'[13]

The amount and cost of information needed to manage a planned economy was ignored. There would be no bureaucracy after the old one had been resolutely smashed: workers would take turns in performing their control functions, since no specialised knowledge was needed. Unskilled workers and cooks would be instructed in the performance of these tasks by the more enlightened workers.

There being no definition of a plan and little recognition of the nature of the planners' practical tasks in Lenin's pre-October writings, one would look in vain for theoretical insights. '*On s'engage—et puis on voit.*' After all, didn't this principle bring Napoleon victories over the Austrian military planners with their '*Die erste Kolonne marschiert . . . Die zweite Kolonne . . .*'? But what is fair in warfare is not necessarily so in economics. Avilov's criticism of Lenin's impatient, unplanned approach to the nationalisation of banking applied in a number of other instances as well. 'Banking is most complex and intricate. . . . A plan has to be worked out first, the guidelines set up, experts invited. Only then should we proceed to nationalise the banks.' Avilov then condemned the primitive approach actually being applied, 'the desire to decide everything with one blow of an axe. This will achieve nothing but the greatest chaos'.[14]

And so it did. Lenin's original idea that a nationalised banking system would enable the government to dominate private enterprise, to regulate markets and introduce a nationwide system of accounting, was soon forgotten. It was replaced by a model of a moneyless, marketless, completely centralised planned economy. 'Socialist organisation of production begins with the liquidation of the market. . . . Production shall be geared to society's needs by means of a unified economic plan',[15] declared Trotsky in 1920. Thus, instead of being viewed as a controllable, manageable medium through which the national economic plan works itself out, confronts reality, and gets adjusted to it, markets came to be regarded as enemies of the plan. Each 'blow of an axe' destroying some market institution or some facet of the price system (and War Communism amounted to a series of such blows) was hailed as another victory for The Plan.

The plan was to be produced by the Supreme Council of the

[13] Ibid. XXVI, p. 86, XXV, pp. 305, 307, 445.
[14] This statement is quoted in: Sarabianov, V., *Ekonomika i ekonomicheskaia politika SSSR* (Moscow-Leningrad, 2 ed., 1926), p. 87.
[15] Trotsky, L., *Sochinenia* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), XV, p. 215.

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National Economy, the VSNKh, an all-powerful economic dictator established in December 1917. The VSNKh was both a planning and an administrative body. Under its highly centralised scheme, the decision-making power of an enterprise manager was reduced to zero; he was no more than a foreman responsible to one of the fifty-odd *glavki* put in control of various branches of industry. The *glavki* were allowed to communicate only with the apex of the planning pyramid, the VSNKh, not with each other. Under this setup the very conception of the economic plan was bound to change and its scope to increase drastically. The plan was now viewed as a list of output and delivery targets, a gigantic 'schedule, showing which economic unit should produce what and in what amount'.[16]

In view of the vast powers granted to the VSNKh, the leadership thought that its task would be an easy one and that, as Trotsky reports, 'coordinated national economic planning could be implemented within a few months [from the time of the October revolution], through the VSNKh, etc.',[17] a belief which he subsequently described as 'utopian'. There was, however, an irreconcilable conflict between the ambitious attempt to regulate everything from the centre and the actual capacity of the information channels available to the planners, the ability of the VSNKh system to transmit reports from the enterprises, process them, and issue commands based on these data.

The informational requirements of the planning process had been ignored from the start in Lenin's pre-revolutionary writings. But, as long as he allowed for the existence of regulated markets and prices, and for some autonomy on the part of enterprises, the amount of information required by the planners was correspondingly reduced. A price is a shorthand expression which summarises hundreds of qualitative characteristics and technical specifications of a commodity which have otherwise to be considered separately by the planners. Furthermore, the use of prices enables the planners to aggregate heterogeneous commodities into broad groups and thus to reduce greatly the number of variables they have to manipulate. Finally, the use of the price system facilitates decentralisation of decisions to the enterprise level. On all these counts, the introduction of a moneyless, marketless, centralised economy increased dramatically the amount of information needed by the central planners without increasing the ability of the system to generate and process such information.

Trotsky made this point tellingly at the ninth party congress in 1920. After praising the highly centralised VSNKh system of economic planning and administration as corresponding to the ideal model of a planned socialist economy, he added:

> This presupposes, however, that the VSNKh disposes of an ideal apparatus of accounting and resource allocation . . . that it has at

[16] Kritsman, L., *Geroicheskii period russkoi revoliutsii* (Moscow, 2 ed., 1926), p. 119.
[17] Trotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

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> its disposal an ideal keyboard such that, by pushing a button, you can transfer a certain amount of coal, firewood, labour, to a place where the need for it arises. Of course, we do not have an ideal keyboard of this kind in any agency as yet.[18]

And, lacking it, he concluded, not only did they not have a national economic plan, they did not even possess an apparatus for working it out and carrying it out.

Not that the apparatus was non-existent. Contrary to Lenin's expectations, the Soviet bureaucracy was growing. In Spring of 1921, with industrial output at a mere fraction of the prewar figure, the number of administrative personnel in the VSNKh agencies above the enterprise level, 230,000, was 96 times as great as that employed by the prewar Ministry of Industry and Trade.[19] And yet the complexity of the tasks facing the economic bureaucracy grew even more. Lenin's original plans called for only a limited nationalisation of some of the largest industrial enterprises. In fact, by July 1918, only forty of them had been nationalised by the central authorities.[20] But by August 1920 over 37,000 industrial enterprises had been nationalised, and on 29 November 1920 it was decided to nationalise all establishments and handicraft shops employing more than five workers. Economic planning was to extend even to cottage industry.

Rozenfeld, in his *Promyshlennaia politika SSSR* (Moscow, 1926, p. 122 ff) tells how attempts to administer these thousands of enterprises from the centre became hopelessly bogged down.

> If the reports arrived at all, they were late and, given the small size of the apparatus, it was not feasible to provide timely direction . . . from the centre. Consequently, the directives reaching a factory were either uninformed and did not correspond to the actual situation, or else they came late and only added to the confusion.

No wonder that the head of the Gosplan, Smilga, concluded that 'under War Communism, our attempts to plan everything resulted in complete planlessness. The proposed task was not properly related to the means available for carrying it out'.[21]

THE importance of these first Soviet attempts is to be measured not by their success, or the lack of it, which often depended on extraneous circumstances. More important were the habits of thought and action, the conditioned reflexes acquired during this formative period. Temporarily suppressed during the brief interlude of the NEP, the golden age of Soviet economic planning, they were revived during

[18] *Deviaty sezd RKP(b)*, *Stenograficheskii otchet* (1920), p. 90.
[19] Vainshtein, A., in: *Narodnoe khoziaistvo*, January 1922, pp. 101–105. The author claims that his data have been adjusted to assure comparability.
[20] Sarabianov, *op. cit.*, p. 87. An additional 473 enterprises were nationalised by various local agencies.
[21] Smilga, I. T., in: *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, 1926, No. 3, p. 49.

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'the second Soviet revolution' of 1929–30 and some of them still continue to shape Soviet economic behaviour.

What were these habits? First, from their very inception, Soviet economic planning and organisation were deliberately patterned after the wartime institutions of Imperial Germany, which were erroneously believed to represent the acme of capitalist rationality and hence a suitable model for the new socialist economy. There followed the period of 'uninterrupted economic storm' of War Communism when, to use Trotsky's formulation, all economic problems of the besieged fortress Russia were subordinated to the supreme goal of survival.[22] This was when the essentially military approach to economic problems was born which still survives in the USSR—the principle of resource allocation by '*udarnost*' (shock tactics), by 'campaigns' and 'storming'. According to this approach, resources are concentrated on a limited number of strategic objectives while the remaining sectors of the economic front may be starving. This was when the principle was born that a planned target must be reached irrespective of cost. The disregard of cost was consistent with the leaders' contention that each target was indispensable for the survival of the state: there being no acceptable alternative to survival, the very concept of cost of a resource (which presupposes that the resource in question can serve alternative ends) loses its meaning. Professor Birman points out that the principle of reaching the assigned objective at any cost still survives in Soviet economic administration. It was also under War Communism that centralisation came to be identified with socialism. Trotsky's dream of a perfectly centralised economy still haunts the Soviet centralisers' minds. Thus, 44 years after Trotsky's speech, I. Malyshev, vice-president of the Central Statistical Administration of the USSR, discloses that

> strange as it may appear, there are people who would like to employ the central computing centre as a vantage point from which to keep account of all the production processes taking place in our immense territory. They would just like to . . . push buttons so that, at their commands, the processes of production, exchange, distribution, and accumulation, in all their manifold . . . manifestations would develop without any breakdowns or complications. But suppose, all of a sudden, a signal is received: something went wrong, say, in Khabarovsk. Then they'd promptly push the proper button and correct the mistake right away. To me all this is nothing but a utopia. . . . Central planning must give the broad goals, the general direction of activity, and enable the people to find for themselves the best means for reaching these goals (*Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta*, 20 June 1964).

While Malyshev's idea corresponds to the NEP slogan, 'centralisation of planning, decentralisation of administration', the centralisers' dreams

[22] Trotzki, L., *Die Grundfragen der Revolution* (Hamburg, 1923), p. 392 ff. Lenin's own slogan at that time was 'Death—or Victory on the Economic Front'.

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have not changed much since the days of Trotsky and War Communism. But there are differences. Trotsky's model is what Lewis Mumford would call a megamachine: a social mechanism for exercising power and control, composed solely of human parts. But the technology of power has changed in the meantime and centralisers now speak of a virtually dehumanised electronic Leviathan composed of a network of high-speed electronic computers, teletypes, and fully automated factories managed by remote control.

Last not least, it was also during War Communism that Russia received the celebrated 15-year electrification plan, worked out by the GOELRO commission, composed of some 200 scientists and engineers, between February and December 1920. It contemplated the construction of thirty large district stations raising the electric power production by 1935 by 360 per cent over the 1913 level.

The idea itself of a centralised provision of electric power through a nationwide unified system of government-owned district stations was not novel. Such a plan had been announced by the King of Saxony in his speech from the throne on 11 November 1915. Not unlike Lenin, His Majesty felt that a task of such fundamental national importance could be performed only by the state, although he failed to coin some such slogan as: capitalism=royal power plus the electrification of the whole country.[23]

Although GOELRO is now called 'the first integrated long-term government plan for the economic development of the USSR',[24] its *spiritus movens*, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, assigned to it at the time the more modest role of a scaffolding for the construction of such a plan. At the outset, in January 1920, he perceived that a project on the GOELRO scale, involving a technological transformation of the whole country, could hardly be drawn up on the basis of engineering criteria alone. He noted accordingly that before tackling the electrification programme an *economic* plan should first be constructed to determine the correct inter-relationships among the sectors of the economy, bring out their interplay, establish the dynamics of the production process. *This* was the immediate and urgent task. But where could a model for this national economic plan be found? Perhaps in Marx? No, Krzhizhanovsky is explicit on this: 'Such a plan must be worked out following roughly the model provided for Germany in a well-known book by Professor Ballod.' By the time the GOELRO plan was completed, in December 1920, Russia's chief planner had to admit that a comprehensive economic plan modelled after Ballod was as yet beyond the reach of Soviet planners, because of the amount of precise statistical data required for its construction, and of the fact that Russia was too backward for sophisticated planning of this type, being not as ripe for

[23] The speech was reported in *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, 1915, p. 1257; see also *ibid.*, 1916, pp. 592 and 1221.

[24] *Ekonomicheskaia entsiklopedia, Promyshlennost i stroitelstvo* (Moscow, 1962), I. p. 331.

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socialism as the Germany for which Ballod had destined his work. 'If we attempted at present to follow Ballod's example and draw an analogous plan for Russia's socialised economy, such an attempt would undoubtedly suffer a hopeless defeat.' Krzhizhanovsky then dwelt on the scientific soundness, feasibility, and advisability of Ballod's approach to economic planning, and cited approvingly various specific institutional solutions adopted by the German scholar, such as the conversion of peasant farms into large-scale socialist estates.[25]

Lenin too drew a parallel between the GOELRO plan and Ballod's work, and complained that his 'scientific plan of a socialist transformation of the whole German economy' was not carried out only because Germany remained capitalist.[26] Thus, paradoxically enough, planning à la Ballod was found to be economically sound but politically too advanced for Germany, whereas in Russia it was feasible politically but too sophisticated economically.

Who was Ballod and what was his plan? [27] Karl Ballod, a professor of economics at the University of Berlin, published the first edition of his *The State of the Future* in 1898, under the *nom de plume* of Atlanticus. His purpose was to fill a gap in Marx's vision of the socialist future, by showing how a centrally planned socialist economy can be organised and what technical means it has to use in order to achieve the great improvement in living standards predicted by Marx. The second, revised edition, incorporating the results of twenty years of checking and updating the original calculations, appeared in 1919.

As many as six different translations of the first edition appeared in Russia in the years 1903–06. In 1920, Ballod visited Russia and two translations of his second edition (the one referred to by Lenin and by Krzhizhanovsky) appeared in Moscow and in Kharkov. All in all, Ballod's work seems to have attracted considerably more attention in Russia than it did in Germany.

In the second edition, written in 1918, the German economist postulated that socialism had been proclaimed in his country as of, say, January 1, 1919, and drew a five-year plan of a rapid growth in output per capita, to be achieved by means of organisational reform and technological progress. Ballod's method is, very roughly, to estimate input-output ratios in the most advanced, most efficient establishments in each sector of the economy. He then calculates the increase in output and/or in productivity that would be achieved if the performance of the whole sector were brought up to the level of these most efficient producers. This was to be brought about by a technological transformation of the German economy: complete elimination of small-scale producers, mechanisation, standardisation, electrification,

[25] Krzhizhanovsky, G. M., *Izbrannoe* (Moscow, 1957), pp. 46, 66.

[26] Lenin, V. I., XXXII, p. 117.

[27] This discussion of Ballod's plan follows the text of the second edition of his work: *Der Zukunftstaat* (Stuttgart, 2nd edition, 1919). Some biographical and bibliographical information was obtained from the 4th, 1927, edition.

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giantism in both industry and agriculture. He calculated the amounts of labour and capital needed to bring about such a transformation in each industry and to operate that industry thereafter. In all these calculations prewar productivity statistics were widely used, referring to both average and top producers in various fields. Concurrently he estimated 'rational' consumption norms on the demand side of the national balance sheet. Supply is then balanced off against demand, and Ballod's own preferences seem to have played a decisive part in determining the equilibrium points. Thus, given the limited supply of poultry, it was to be consumed solely by the rentiers and the members of the free professions.

On reading Ballod, one finds it difficult to agree with Lenin's appraisal of his plan as being 'scientific'. Like later Soviet plans, it abounds in illegitimate extrapolations and optimistic assumptions; equilibrium is achieved—if at all—by a mechanical fiat, strategic factors are glossed over while key inter-relationships get drowned in a flood of unnecessary detail. At the same time, on almost each page, one finds ingenious ideas about the concrete forms of the economic organisation of a planned socialist economy. One also finds that Ballod's utopia, written in 1918, actually foreshadows various organisational solutions adopted subsequently in the Soviet economy.

To give a few examples. All agricultural land is collectivised and converted into 36,000 state farms. Peasants are allowed to keep their houses and gardens of 1–2 hectares each. Delivery quotas are set for all important farm products to guarantee to the urban population bread rations of 500 grams a day, milk rations of 1/3 litre, etc. Incidentally, Krzhizhanovsky, in his appraisal of Ballod's work, characterises this state of affairs as 'a happy country of general welfare and prosperity'.

In industry, Ballod anticipates the famous 'socialist competition' among workers ('*ein Wetteifer in Mehrleisten*'), while factory managers will have at their disposal a bonus fund and an innovation fund. Workers will have their factory committees but these, not unlike Soviet trade unions, have as their main objective to maximise labour productivity by, *inter alia*, promoting Taylor's system.

But the most striking parallel between Ballod's *State of the Future* and Stalin's planned economy is that both are autarkic, highly centralised, and designed to implement 'socialism in one country'. Anticipating an international environment hostile to the socialist Germany, Ballod prescribes economic independence from the rest of the world, with imports as little as possible and exports nil. At best, exports are a necessary evil. In 1918, Ballod emphasised the need for a strong government and argued that a centralised socialist economy was the only feasible one. In 1927, with specific reference to the Russian NEP, he condemned the autonomy of the trusts and concluded that 'what

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Russia needs is an economic dictator', who would rule the economy through a system of industrial ministries.[28]

P. I. Popov, head of the Central Statistical Administration during the NEP years, while criticising Ballod's planning methodology, revealed that 'it was widely applied in our country during the era of War Communism', and that 'during that era, Ballod exercised an enormous influence upon the ideas of those who worked on the theoretical problems of how to organise the national economy'.[29] After the NEP interlude, when a different climate of opinion prevailed, this early formative influence may have reasserted itself under Stalinism. It would go beyond the scope of this essay to pursue the matter further. In any event, Karl Ballod, the unjustly forgotten pioneer of economic planning, should clearly receive more recognition in the context of Soviet planning than he has thus far. His early influence on Soviet planners throws a revealing light upon their approach to economic planning. The German scholar was, if one may say so, a practical utopian. He offered ingenious suggestions for the improvements to be effected in various parts of the economic system but had no clear conception of the economy as an organic whole. His planning methodology consists of rules of thumb. Despite his own and Soviet claims, his approach to economic planning is not 'scientific'. If Karl Marx was a theorist without a plan, Karl Ballod was a planner without theory. And so were his early Soviet followers.

THERE is as yet no theory of a planned economy, said Professor A. Mendelson in 1926.[30] The first annual plan for the Soviet economy, *Kontrolnye Tsifry 1925/26*, had just been produced and work on the first five-year plan was in progress, but these were practical rather than theoretical achievements. However, the Soviet Union seemed clearly destined to produce the new science of national resource allocation. It disposed of a vast store of statistical data, of a rapidly accumulating experience with national economic planning, and, above all, of an outstanding group of exceptionally able, dedicated, resourceful economists who combined theoretical insight with practical acumen. The pioneering analysis of 'the balance of the national economy' by V. G. Groman, L. N. Litoshenko, P. I. Popov and others; G. A. Feldman's model of economic growth; N. D. Kondratiev's analysis of business fluctuations; E. E. Slutsky's contributions to stochastic analysis, to mention but a few—these and other original efforts during the late 1920s were far ahead of contemporary western work in these areas. If allowed to continue, these efforts would have made important contributions to the development of modern macro-economics, econometrics,

[28] Ballod, op. cit., 4 ed., pp. 54, 64.
[29] Popov, P. I. ed., *Balans narodnogo khoziaistva SSSR 1923-24 goda* (Moscow, 1926), p. 20.
[30] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, 1926, No. 3, p. 99.

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and theory of economic planning. But they were not allowed to continue. With the onset of the second Soviet revolution in 1929–30, economists in general and mathematical economists in particular became suspect. Their analysis and advice concerning problems of resource allocation on a national scale came to be interpreted as an encroachment on the political leadership's monopoly of economic goal-setting. Some of the brilliant pioneers of the 1920s disappeared without trace in the purge that ensued; others, like Feldman, were set free a quarter of a century later; the fortunate ones were merely condemned to silence. The crackdown on 'the mathematical deviation in planning' was thus a complete success, and the theorists' interference with the practitioners' rules of thumb was effectively terminated.

Four decades after Mendelson, Professor A. M. Birman, Pro-rector of the Moscow Institute of National Economy, still sees the main deficiency of the Soviet theory of economic planning not in its errors or inadequacies, but in its virtual absence.

> We cannot put up any longer with the continued existence of a blank spot in our economic research: the absence of a theory of socialist economic policy which would tell us how to organise and direct the Soviet national economy as a whole. . . . This discipline has for its subject the national economy and its management. Research in this field will result in scientifically substantiated recommendations, concrete enough to be usable by planning and financial government agencies on the central and local level (*Planovoe Khoziaistvo*, 1963, no. 3, p. 12).

Birman then outlines the proposed scope of this new science of national planning and resource allocation which, he emphasises, has in fact to be created from scratch. It would study, among other things, such topics as the proper role to be played by commands and by incentives in resource allocation, the relationship between centralised and decentralised decision-making and between the territorial and branch systems of industry administration, the ways of reconciling the interests of an enterprise with those of society (the familiar Liberman theme), the use in planning of physical and value measures, of long-term and short-term targets, the principles of price formation.

Birman's proposal raises some intriguing questions. Soviet planners have now had almost five decades of practical experience with planning tools and problems enumerated by the Moscow professor. The standard Soviet claim throughout has been that 'socialist planning is based on strictly scientific foundations'. The discovery at this late date that these foundations are in fact missing, and that the theory of a centrally planned economy has to be built up from scratch, comes therefore as an anti-climax. Birman emphasises that it is the economists' duty and privilege to fill the gap and to work out the theoretical principles of the new science of planning and control. The question arises, why have they been derelict in the performance of this duty so far?

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Part of the answer can be found in Joseph Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, the dictator's ideological testament. When discussing the scope and method of economics, Stalin took to task an obscure Ukrainian scholar, Yaroshenko, for having advanced the thesis that 'the main task of the political economy of socialism is . . . to work out and develop the theory of planning and of the growth of the national economy'. That definition was not to Stalin's taste. He accused its unfortunate author of an affinity with Bukharin. The theory of economic planning, he emphasised, was the planners' own domain, and economists were not to infringe that jealously guarded monopoly. 'Problems of the rational organisation of the forces of production, of national economic planning, etc., all these are not the subject-matter of political economy but of the leadership's economic policy. To include problems of economic policy in political economy means to destroy it as a science.'[31]

Stalin's injunction against the economists' interference with planning merely made formal a state of affairs that had prevailed for more than two decades. The taboo was being interpreted broadly and prevented the economists not only from analysing the rulers' decisions on ends (such as the high rate of investment or the preferential growth of heavy industry), but also from suggesting the most economical means of reaching these ends. Significantly enough, virtually all topics listed by Birman fall into this latter category: the optimal degree of centralisation, the best use of prices and incentives, the appraisal of methods by which central planners' preferences were imposed upon the economy.

Not that the economists, even if they chose to disregard Stalin's advice, had much choice. In order to perform the exacting task set for them by Birman and to arrive at meaningful generalisations of Soviet planning experience, as well as to make 'concrete recommendations utilisable in practice', at least three prerequisites were needed: free access to statistical data, specialised techniques with which to analyse them, and the means of publication.

During the Stalinist period, these prerequisites were lacking. Under the prevailing security regulations, scholars were denied access to unpublished planning materials and to primary statistical data more recent than 1926.[32] No statistical yearbooks were issued between 1939 and 1956, those published since contain important gaps, and economists continue to complain of the lack of access to primary data, although the situation seems to have improved in recent years. Moreover, the belief that the needed information exists, even if under seven seals, may not always be justified, since some essential materials, which would be considered quite indispensable for economic analysis by western standards, were not collected.[33]

[31] Stalin, I. V., *Ekonomicheskie problemy sotsializma v SSSR* (Moscow, 1952), pp. 141-142 and 170-171.
[32] Ostrovitianov, K. V., in: *Vestnik vysshei shkoly*, 1946, No. 3-4, p. 18.
[33] For example, statistics on urban income distribution. Cf. Maslov, P. P., in *Voprosy filosofii*, 1962, No. 3, p. 72.

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As regards the ability to analyse data, after the arrest of Russia's 'lost generation' of econometricians and mathematical economists in 1930, the use of advanced mathematical methods in economic research and planning was virtually outlawed. Of even more far-reaching consequence was the concurrent drastic curtailment of the offerings of mathematics and statistics in Soviet faculties of economics and planning, despite the students' bitter protests that 'the knowledge of arithmetic and first-year algebra may be sufficient for a small shopkeeper but not for the purposes of planning the national economy'.[34] At the same time, statistical laws were declared inapplicable to a planned economy and statistics itself was condemned to what Strumilin called at the time 'an academic harakiri': it was to 'wither away' and to be replaced by book-keeping. The use of an arithmetic (but not geometric!) average and manipulation of percentages came to be regarded as the acme of statistical sophistication. Ignorance was thus elevated to the rank of dogma, mathematical economics having been proclaimed 'anti-Marxian', and whole generations of newly-graduating economists and planning specialists acquired a vested interest in the perpetuation of this state of affairs.

A researcher bold and resourceful enough to produce original work in the theory of economic planning in spite of these manifold barriers and taboos would be likely to see it emasculated or banned altogether by the multiple censorship. Academician K. V. Ostrovitianov, Russia's economist-laureate at that time, disclosed in 1952 that the author of a manuscript on an economic topic had to have it approved by ten to fifteen different authorities, and that editorial boards in particular 'overinsured themselves' by refusing works dealing with controversial topics.[35] Faced with these formidable handicaps, Soviet economists were obviously in no position to develop or critically appraise theoretical principles of economic planning. These remained the practitioners' monopoly and their best-guarded secret.

THE possibility remains, of course, that the planners themselves made creative use of their jealously guarded monopoly and, becoming their own theorists, developed such principles themselves. This view was forcefully stated by a well-known student of Soviet affairs:

> The planners had at their disposal an amazingly effective 'secret weapon': the famous theorems of 'simple and expanding reproduction' which Karl Marx had developed in the second volume of *Das Kapital*. . . . Adapted by Soviet planners to a publicly owned economy and further developed, they helped to produce results which future historians may well describe as the most momentous feat in social technology achieved in this generation.[36]

[34] *Krasny student*, 23 June 1930; quoted in *Pravda*, 31 October 1930.
[35] Ostrovitianov, K. V., in: *Izvestia akademii nauk SSSR, otdelenie ekonomiki i prava*, 1952, No. 2, p. 130, and No. 3, pp. 216–217.
[36] Deutscher, I., *Heretics and Renegades* (London, 1955), p. 117.

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According to another, more sceptical, view, the Gosplan sphinx had in fact no theoretical secret to tell. This was the impression of Harvard's Vasily Leontief on his return from a visit to the Soviet Union in 1960. 'Western economists have often tried to discover "the principle" of the Soviet technique of planning. They never succeeded since, up to now, there has been no such thing.'[37] Interestingly enough, economic planners in other communist countries who, during the period of wholesale transplantation of Soviet methods and institutions, were learning their lessons at the Gosplanners' knees, tended to reach conclusions rather similar to Leontief's. A Chinese economist summarised their experience in a blunt statement made during the 'hundred flowers' days of 1957:

> The theory of the political economy of socialism does not exist. This chapter is essentially empty. . . . We are moving blindly, *fumbling and just imitating the Soviet pattern.* Our economic planning represents a mixture of dogmatism and empiricism.[38]

Similar appraisals of Soviet planning theory (or the lack of it) came from Polish and Yugoslav economists.

As regards Marx's growth model, it was indeed developed and applied to planning purposes by G. A. Feldman, in the 1920s. His work was, however, interrupted for a quarter of a century by deportation to a labour camp. In the meantime, if we are to believe Professor A. A. Konius, one of the few surviving mathematical economists of the 1920s, the mathematical sophistication of Soviet economists declined to a point where, during the Stalinist period, they would find it difficult not only to develop Marx's model but even to read Marx's very simple algebra.[39] The model seems thus indeed to have become 'a secret weapon'—secret, that is, to its alleged users.

In actual practice, crucial decisions tend, apparently, to be based on rule of thumb *cum* intuition, on visual inspection of data, or, in extreme cases, on the decision-maker's arbitrary say-so. Khrushchev used the following simile to describe the way in which annual economic plans were drawn.

> A circle in geometry is divided into 360 degrees. Now suppose that these 360 parts are all apportioned among committees, ministries, and departments of the Gosplan, each of which takes care of only the segment allotted to it. . . .

The agency in charge of 'a segment'—an industry or a product—then sets its output goal for the next year on the basis of a mechanical extrapolation of its average rate of growth over the past few years. Investment funds were apportioned among sectors and industries by a similar extrapolation of the past trends. 'By way of illustration, if 19·7 billion

[37] *Foreign Affairs*, January 1960, p. 263.
[38] Cf. *Voprosy ekonomiki*, 1958, No. 2, p. 95.
[39] Konius, A. A., in *Problemy optimalnogo planirovania, proektirovania i upravlenia proizvodstva* (Moscow, 1963), pp. 499–501.

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rubles has been allocated for capital investment in construction and assembly work, these appropriations are now distributed by branches on the basis of the established growth rates. Thus capital investments are determined according to proportions established long ago' (*Izvestiya*, 15 February 1964, 29 June 1963).

This method of target-setting by extrapolation obviously favoured long-established industries and products and impeded innovation. If pursued consistently it would result in balanced growth with a vengeance, but of course priorities were changed from time to time and resources shifted to industries or products designated as new 'decisive links'. But on what basis should such structural shifts be made? Ever since the 1920s planners have succeeded only too well in freeing themselves from the tyranny of the markets and from restrictions which might be imposed on their freedom of decision by price signals and profitability constraints. Trotsky's complaint made 47 years ago retains some validity even now: it is easier to free oneself from various market forces than to find adequate substitutes for them. In the absence of a system of relative prices that would correctly reflect relative scarcities of goods and their real factor costs, planners' decisions on shifts in resource allocation are apparently based on technological criteria or on the imitation of western structural patterns. Thus, 'in order to determine whether a given industry is progressive we must often look across the ocean; but, after all, this should not be our only guidepost' (*Izvestiya*, 4 December 1964).

The picture that emerges of Gosplan practices from these and similar descriptions seems to support the charge of 'planning without theory'. Assumptions underlying important decisions are not explicitly stated, chains of deductive reasoning are conspicuous by their absence, a practitioner's fiat takes the place of a theorist's syllogism. On closer examination, however, the Soviet experience is better described as planning based on inadequate theoretical principles. The apparent crudeness of the planners' approach does not mean that the principles in question were necessarily crude. Rather, they were inadequate in the sense of not being explicitly recognised, thought out, and spelled out. A famous scientist's warning applies here with particular force:

> The attempt to avoid complex reasoning often results only in the concealment of it. The views of 'practical men' are usually derived from assumptions and arguments no less complex than those on which theory is based; they are more and not less liable to error because they are less openly expressed.[40]

For example, the Gosplan practice of setting targets by extrapolation of past growth trends implies that the existing inter-sectoral pattern of growth rates is the optimal one. Similarly, the practice of 'looking across the ocean' and imitating American technologies and relative rates of growth of American industries presupposes that these are

[40] Campbell, N. R., *Physics: The Elements* (Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 121.

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optimal and applicable to the very different Russian supply and demand conditions. To substantiate such seemingly 'simple' implicit assumptions one would have to construct extremely complicated dynamic models, and have more information about the two economies than is probably available.

This brings us to an alternative explanation of Gosplan's pragmatic oversimplified methods. With the existing degree of centralisation and with the relatively primitive technology of data-processing available to the planners, optimal planning based on the use of sophisticated mathematical models may be beyond the reach of the planning system. An annual national economic plan is still an extremely voluminous, detailed document. To draw up such a plan in the desired detail, to keep check on its execution, and to adjust it in response to unforeseeable events, would require Trotsky's 'Laplacian brain' and his 'ideal keyboard'. As we shall see, even high-speed electronic computers are not likely to meet these exacting standards. For the time being, then, the ability of the planning and administrative system to process data and transmit messages from and to enterprises seems to fall short of the requirements of optimal planning. In this situation, the planners may have little choice but to make arbitrary decisions and to use rule of thumb.

THERE is ample evidence that the amount of information actually available to Soviet planners and administrators at various levels falls considerably short of that needed for making informed, optimal choices.

For example, it was estimated, in the Magnitogorsk Steel Works, one of the leading Soviet enterprises, that its managerial personnel should receive and process about 50 times as much information as they do now if they are to be able to make optimal decisions.[41] On the intermediate decision-making level, in an average Sovnarkhoz, it would take four million man-hours a year to prepare merely one variant of a well-balanced annual plan in the necessary detail, as well as to fully process and analyse reports on its fulfilment. In order to ensure that the plan in question is not only feasible but also optimal (i.e. that its objectives are met at the least cost), at least one hundred variants, rather than merely one, would have to be considered. But in fact only 200,000 to 300,000 man-hours were spent in an average Sovnarkhoz for these purposes, meaning that, at best, only 5 to 7 per cent of the work required was actually performed (*Izvestiya*, 25 April 1964). No wonder enterprises complained about arbitrary decisions and late, unrealistic, uncoordinated targets being assigned to them by the Sovnarkhoz.

Finally, on the national level, Soviet mathematicians estimate (*Izvestiya*, 6 September 1964) that it would take some 30,000,000,000 man-years to prepare an internally consistent annual plan for the

[41] Sharol, L. I., *Kiberneticheskie sistemy vysshego ranga* (Moscow, 1963), p. 30.

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national economy in the necessary detail, assuming the use of no equipment more sophisticated than desk calculators (a realistic assumption until recent years). Academician Glushkov claims that even if one million high-speed electronic computers were harnessed to that task, optimal planning of the economy from the centre would still be beyond their capability.[42] The old dream, dating back to the days of War Communism, of a completely centralised planned economy can then hardly ever be realised. Trotsky's ideal planning keyboard remains a dream even in our electronic age, and his socialist music of the future will have to be played in a different key.

But even the present limited degree of centralisation of economic planning and decision-making in the Soviet economy is obviously not consistent with the actual ability of the system to transmit commands and reports, process data, and provide timely and adequate information on the changes that occur. The disproportion between the growing need for informed decisions and the ability to make them has become more acute in recent years. The following paradox seems to summarise the Soviet planners' dilemma. To prepare optimal plans and adjust them to the continuously changing environment, planners and administrators must be supplied with a sufficient amount of detailed information. But the cost of generating, processing, and transmitting the required amount of data would be so prohibitive as to more than offset the savings and benefits resulting from optimal choices.

A far-reaching decentralisation is clearly required to break the horns of this dilemma, a delegation of the decision-making power from the centre to the periphery of the system and a redefinition of their respective roles. In the process, the very concept of economic planning is apt to be revised. Soviet economic reforms of recent years may be interpreted in this light.

* * * *

The reader is referred to Marshall Goldman's essay in this symposium for a discussion of recent Soviet reforms. I will limit myself to a few words concerning their relationship to and probable impact on the informational efficiency of Soviet planning.

Evsey Liberman's celebrated proposals aimed at letting enterprise managers decide *how* to produce, after the planners have told them *what* to produce, to whom and when to deliver the product. The rationale of these and similar proposals was stated by the late Academician Nemchinov (echoing Adam Smith): the manager knows best what means to employ to satisfy the stated demand for his product.

The next important step was the experiment with 'direct links' between the producer and the user of his product, begun in July 1964 in two factories, and expanding in widening and deepening circles since

[42] Glushkov, V., in *Vestnik akademii nauk SSSR*, 1963, No. 10, p. 11 ff.

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Now it was implicitly admitted that the users of the product know better than the planners what is good for *them*, and should be allowed to express their preferences directly to the producers rather than go through the intermediary of higher-up administrative agencies which distort them. Decisions on *what* to produce are thus slipping (albeit to a very limited extent so far) from the planners' hands.

The increasing use of direct links threatens another shibboleth of the War Communism years: central allocation of producer goods. A producer can hardly respond promptly to changes in consumer demand under the present system of rationing of supplies which requires him to state his needs many months in advance, and makes it difficult to change his request thereafter. This survival of rationing comes under attack from, among others, Professor Birman.

So far the actual reforms have amounted, with some exceptions, to little more than half-measures, but they are clearly steps in the right direction, as far as the informational efficiency of planning is concerned. They relieve central planners of at least some of their impossible tasks, and free the periphery from petty tutelage. Information channels would be freed of mountains of statistical garbage and pseudo-information: irrelevant data, delayed reports, uninformed commands.

Even more important, we may see the demise of the very conception, born under War Communism, of the central plan drawn up as an extremely detailed bill of goods, a schedule specifying (as Kritsman once put it) who produces what, for whom, and in what amounts. In the hands of present-day econometricians (as in those of their courageous forerunners of the 1920s), the plan becomes a model showing strategic inter-relationships among broad economic aggregates, and a programme of action aimed at establishing optimal values of these variables. Freed from their present role of part-time storeroom-clerks, part-time drill sergeants, central planners could concentrate on the performance of their proper task, which, as Malyshev points out, consists in giving the general objective, the direction of movement, letting the workers themselves find and apply the best solutions for specific problems (*Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta*, 20 June 1964).

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TRADE AND THE CONSUMER

Marshall I. Goldman

Introduction

FOR FIFTY YEARS, TRADE has been the forgotten sector in the Soviet economy. Whenever there was a need for more resources in the high priority sectors, they were almost always diverted from the trade sector, which, inevitably, lagged behind developments on foot elsewhere in the world. After fifty years of backwardness, this has become so critical that progress and productivity in other sectors of the economy are beginning to suffer. It seems almost certain, therefore, that Kosygin and his successors will have to devote much greater attention to trade and distribution if they are to generate the improvements they seek in the rest of the Soviet economy.

It must come as a surprise to the few old Bolsheviks who are left to see that marketing suddenly necessitates so much attention. While a good Marxist concordance will contain several statements from Lenin to the effect that 'Trade is the centre of everything now',[1] the fact remains that Soviet marketing has seldom been considered as important as manufacturing, construction, or even agriculture. Marxist theoreticians and their Bolshevik successors have always argued that the basic challenge in any economy was full and efficient production. It was asserted that under capitalism, the capitalists prevented the full utilisation and enjoyment of the nation's natural resources. Once they were eliminated, it was always assumed, it would be a simple matter to move the products of an unshackled industry to awaiting consumers. Eventually, as industrial production increased, the Soviet citizen would indeed be able to consume according to his need. Communist industry would have no trouble ascertaining these needs and would take care of them efficiently. Unfortunately it has not worked out this way.

To find out why consumption and service per capita have lagged so badly behind the growth of other sectors of the Soviet economy and of marketing in the West, it is necessary to discuss the interplay between ideology and history. The precepts of Marxism and Leninism are fetters enough, but to be fair, we should recall that trade and service in Tsarist Russia were never as sophisticated as they were in western Europe or other cosmopolitan centres. Consequently it is necessary to know a little about pre-revolutionary trade in Russia to appreciate the obstacles that the communist regime had to overcome.

Before the revolution

TSARIST RUSSIA WAS NEVER NOTED for its marketing innovations. There were no stores or trading events of international importance. The periodic

[1] From Lenin's *Collected Works*, vol. 36, p. 404. Quoted in G. A. Dikhtiar, *Sovetskaia Torgovlia v Period Postroenila Sotsializma* (Moscow, 1961), p. 22.

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trade fairs at Nizhni Novogorod were of considerable local significance, but even they had the flavour of the frontier about them. Russian fairs had none of the excitement or sophistication of the fairs at Leipzig, Frankfurt, or Poznan. The same lack of sophistication prevailed in retailing. Those cities which were most European in character also had the most cosmopolitan stores but they were almost all followers of patterns set in the West. Petersburg as the window on the West served as the main port of entry for European fashions and processes. French and English styles were imported and produced and then sold in the shops along Nevskii Prospect, but they seldom penetrated any deeper into the country.

Historically, Russian merchants had clustered together in outdoor markets. With time, their stalls became more permanent in nature and ultimately some became shops. Often merchants would combine together to occupy shops within a common building, and some of these buildings became quite elaborate with covered arcades. There was room for as many as 240 stores in Moscow's Verkhnie Torgovli Riady (Upper Trade Shops). After the revolution these were nationalised and put under the control of a single management, even though the selling space continued to be divided into separate store sections. The Verkhnie Torgovli Riady eventually became the famous GUM. Such a complex of shops was also the origin of the even larger Gostyni Dvor in Leningrad, which had space for 288 stores.

For the few who could afford it, there was also a chain of fashionable food shops run by the Eliseyev Brothers. These stores, which can still be found on the main streets of Leningrad and Moscow, later served as the basis for what the Soviets call Gastronomi. Other stores were run by west Europeans, such as the Muir and Merrilees department store in Moscow, which is today the site of TsUM. Some western firms also had Russian branches. The Singer Sewing Machine Company, for example, had 21 stores in Petersburg and was selling over one million sewing machines a year before the revolution.[2] But with these few exceptions, the Russians followed far behind the rest of Europe in merchandising. Most Russians simply could not afford to buy store-sold goods. Between 80 and 90 per cent of the population were peasants and most of them lived outside the money economy. Clothing was largely hand-made and consumer appliances were virtually unknown. Consequently the average Russian consumer did most of his trading at the stalls of the peasant farm markets.

The revolution

COMING AFTER FOUR HARD YEARS of war and economic disruption, the Bolsheviks' chief concern was to feed the people. This was no simple

[2] A. I. Sobolev, *Torgovlia v Leningrade* (Moscow, 1958), pp. 5–18. When the Bolsheviks took over Singer's offices and found the individual files for the millions of people who had bought Singer sewing machines on credit, they were convinced they had uncovered an American espionage network.

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matter. Supply channels had been over-extended by the war and then destroyed in the revolution and counter-revolution that followed. In the midst of all this, stores were nationalised by their workers or by the state, and farms taken over by the peasants. Furthermore, because of unrestrained inflation, money had absolutely no value. Those who had food or other goods were unwilling to sell them for anything but other goods. To provide food for those who had no goods to barter, the revolutionary government organised raiding parties throughout the countryside to confiscate what they could find.

To distribute the goods that it did have, the government relied primarily on the co-operative movement. After the emancipation of the peasants in 1861, co-operative societies had grown rapidly although not necessarily soundly. Despite a high level of failure, by 1914 there were over 10,000 of them.[3] Membership in the co-operatives became compulsory for most urban residents after the revolution. With the introduction of NEP, however, the government retreated from complete control of all retail operations and membership in the co-operative societies was again made voluntary. Private trade was also legalised in March 1921, after having been prohibited in November 1918. But the state did not withdraw from all retailing activities. A network of state trading stores was formed which eventually became the main outlet for consumer goods in the urban areas.

The introduction of the five-year plans in 1928 and the collectivisation of agriculture about the same time resulted in a severe shortage of food and other consumer goods. During this period the distribution channels which had gradually been reconstructed during the NEP period were once again destroyed. To cope with the situation, the state began to assume an ever-increasing responsibility for the distribution of goods. Shortages became so acute that rationing was introduced in 1928 and gradually extended from city to city. However, the full impact of rationing was often mitigated for the privileged few who had recourse to special stores. Other outlets sold goods to all who had the money at prices far above the official rates. There were also special stores like Insnab and Torgsin, which sold only to foreigners or to those with access to foreign currency. The store a person was entitled to shop in was often more important than how much money he earned.

While private traders had been encouraged during the NEP period and tolerated during the collectivisation drive, by 1932 all private traders were outlawed. The resale of goods by private middlemen between the producer and the consumer was banned. The only kind of private transaction permitted was the sale of surplus food by the peasants themselves. Such sales could be made in the old peasant markets which were redesignated collective farm or kolkhoz markets.

By the time rationing ended in 1936, the basic pattern of retail trade had been established. Co-operative stores, at one time the largest

[3] A. P. Polovnikov, *Torgovlia v Staroi Rossii* (Moscow, 1958), p. 93.

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component of the retail network, were confined to rural areas. These were administered by a special bureaucratic network headed by Tsentrosoiuz, the Central Co-operative Union, while government stores under the Ministry of Trade were given an operating monopoly in urban areas. This pattern persisted until the outbreak of war in 1941, when rationing and the privileged store system of shopping were reintroduced. The emergency arrangements of the early 1930s were duplicated in almost exact detail. It was even decided to permit co-operative stores in the cities.

The war years were extremely difficult. Despite all attempts to keep the state stores supplied, the kolkhoz market often became the only source of food. In 1945, 51 per cent of total food sales was transacted in kolkhoz markets; other outlets often had no supplies at all. The currency reform of 1947 brought an end to rationing and a return to normalcy, albeit in an austere form. The basic structure of the retail network reverted to its pre-war pattern; the consumer co-operatives were again returned to the countryside and most of the privileged stores were abolished.

Problems of affluence

DURING MOST OF THE PAST fifty years, the welfare of the Russian consumer has had low priority. It was only in the mid-1950s that living standards were brought up to the level they had reached in 1928, which was about the same as that of 1914.[4] In other words, it had taken the Russians approximately twenty-five years to recover from the disruption caused by the introduction of the five-year plans and collectivisation, and the destruction of the second world war.

However, since the early 1950s and the death of Stalin, living conditions have improved rapidly. At the same time, Soviet trade officials began to realise that marketing was not as simple as they had at first assumed. It had been acknowledged that services were poor and the quality of goods below that available in Europe. Moreover, shortages of consumer goods seemed to be endemic in a system that concentrated its efforts on heavy industry. It had been assumed that this would be temporary, that as production increased, shortages would disappear and quality improve. Yet, to everyone's surprise, before the problem of shortages and quality had been solved, inventories of certain goods began to accumulate. In fact, they began to grow at a much faster rate than sales. Whereas total sales doubled between 1954 and 1964, inventories tripled.[5] For some goods like textiles, the difference in ratios was considerably greater. There were reports that excess and unanticipated inventories at times amounted to as much as $4·3 milliard.[6]

[4] Janet Chapman, *Real Wages in Soviet Russia Since 1928* (Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 118.

[5] Tsentralnoe Statisticheskoe Upravelenie, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR v 1958 godu* (Moscow, 1959), pp. 656, 637; *Nar. Khoz, 1964*, pp. 621, 623.

[6] G. Matveev and S. Mezhiborskaia, 'Uluchshit Normirovanie Oborotnykh Sredstv v. Torgovle', *Dengi i Kredit*, December 1963, p. 22.

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The formation of excess inventories could be explained if there was unemployment or if Soviet living conditions had suddenly reached western standards. But there was no major unemployment problem, and although the Soviet consumer had seen vast improvements in recent years, his living standard had not reached the levels of western Europe. Consequently, his reluctance to purchase all that was offered for sale could not be ascribed to saturation. Nor was it due to a shortage of money. Even more remarkable than the fact that inventories had grown faster than sales, savings bank deposits had grown even faster than both; from 1954 to 1964, they almost quadrupled.[7] Undoubtedly some of the increased savings were being put aside for the purchase of consumer durables and co-operative apartments, which had become available in increasing numbers. However, it became apparent to Soviet planners that some of the money was being saved simply because the consumers could not find anything they wanted to buy. This was an entirely unexpected development.

The absence of a marketing mentality

THERE ARE SEVERAL MAJOR REASONS for the existence of this new marketing problem in the USSR. A partial and perhaps superficial explanation is that Soviet planners were not prepared to make the proper adjustment to surpluses, salesmanship, and quality. All too often senior marketing officials rose to the top because of their ability to cope with shortages. For example, the present Minister of Trade for the RSFSR received his severest test as the main supply official during the siege of Leningrad, and many other trade officials have flourished in an environment of scarcity. They have yet to learn how to deal with abundance. They have been trained to be purchasing agents, not salesmen.

There are other more fundamental explanations for the Soviet inadequacies in the field of trade. First, there are some ideological barriers. Second, the Russians have always lagged behind their western neighbours in these respects. These two factors are not mutually exclusive.

Some western analysts argue that communism does not necessarily mean that there will be a distribution problem. Others contend that communism does indeed bring a fall in standards and that the USSR's dismal failure in marketing is explained not by history but by doctrine. This is reflected in the Czech story about the Russian who insists on buying Czech rather than Russian shoes. The salesman tells him there is no difference, both are made in communist factories. This the customer acknowledges but, he says, the Czechs have had communism only twenty years and their standards have not suffered as much *yet*.

It is easy to see how ideology could be blamed for the neglect of trade and light industry. Stalin's main goal was rapid industrialisation, which he assumed could be attained only by total concentration on the

[7] For a more detailed analysis of this problem, see Marshall I. Goldman, 'The Reluctant Consumer and Economic Fluctuations in the Soviet Union', *The Journal of Political Economy*, August 1965.

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means of production. But it would be misleading to attribute this to Marxist ideology, since Marx assumed that the revolution would break out in a highly developed country. The Soviet concentration on heavy industry is rather the reaction of an underdeveloped country seeking industrialisation than the response of a country operating with a Marxist ideology.

Nevertheless, the application of Marxist ideology has created obstacles. For instance, the injunction against private enterprise has been a very serious handicap. Most although not all of the innovations in trade in the West have come from private entrepreneurs. These were outlawed in the Soviet system, and although this did not eliminate all innovation, it did remove a significant source. Even in the West today, without government ownership, it is often difficult for the private entrepreneur to introduce something new without going through frustrating red tape. Innovation is difficult enough when it is dependent upon access to capital; when it must depend also on bureaucratic approval and even stimulation, stagnation rather than innovation is likely to be the result.

Perhaps an actual case may help to show the difficulties involved in introducing new processes in the USSR. I remember a discussion in the office of the Leningrad Sovnarkhoz in 1960. An American meatpacker was explaining why he undertook to bear the expense of prepacking his meat for his supermarket customers. The retailers did not have to convince him of the wisdom of the move. It was obvious to him that if he did not buy the equipment for prepackaging his output once the equipment had been offered for sale, he would lose all his business to other meatpackers. At this point, a Russian from the Ministry of Trade who had been listening interjected, 'See, that is our problem. We have been trying to get the meat packer and the Sovnarkhoz to package meat for us but they won't and there is no way we can threaten them with alternative action'. The entrenched bureaucracy frustrated those who saw the need for change. No one wanted to assume the responsibility and extra cost of introducing a desirable innovation. Moreover, the absence of competitive pressure and the assurance of a ready outlet for the meat products of the Sovnarkhoz made it possible to survive with the existing method of preparation.

In their antipathy to private business, the Soviets have virtually denied themselves the benefits of improved service that come with competitive effort. While competition in the West has its shortcomings, one thing it does guarantee is 'hustle'. As the American meatpacker explained, if he had not provided the appropriate service, he knew his competitor would. Thus competition, when it is effective, makes possible good service that must be prompt and of good quality. This may lead to duplication of effort—the familiar case of several milk companies delivering milk along the same street. But the fact that there is someone else ready to snatch his business forces the milkman to deliver his

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goods as promised. In most Russian cities, there is no milk delivery at all.[8]

It is not just the creative entrepreneur with the grand and original idea who has been suppresssed. All private middlemen have been eliminated. In commerce, where merchandise is subject to spoilage and sudden changes in taste, flexibility and rapid response are the keys to effective operation. It is virtually impossible to anticipate such changes in a yearly plan prepared a year to a year and a half in advance. Moreover, when an emergency arises or an opportunity presents itself that was not originally foreseen in the state plan, most state trade officials in the USSR show a reluctance to act. Since private individuals have not been allowed to step in during such emergencies, there have been many unexpected problems in Soviet economic life.

In purely economic terms, there was not much urgency about nationalising trade activities after the revolution. There appear to be relatively few economies of scale in some forms of marketing and there is less capital involved, at least in comparison with heavy industry. It would have been reasonable therefore to concentrate administrative attention on heavy industry and exempt all trade activities involving fewer than five or ten employees.

Occasionally the state recognises the need for more flexibility and tries to do something about it. In 1953, the co-operative store network was authorised to engage in the commission trade of peasant-grown products. This has reduced somewhat the need for the peasant himself to carry his own goods to market. However, the system is highly inefficient, as shown by the continued shortage of fresh fruit and vegetables in almost all large Russian cities except at harvest time. In turn the high prices that result either before or after the season make it profitable for peasants from the Caucasus to fly north with a few baskets of fruit and vegetables.[9] On occasion some enterprising (if the word can be used) peasants have even managed to buy all the seats on Aeroflot passenger planes for about $6,100 and load them with nothing but scarce fruits and vegetables.[10] Provided the plane does not fly the merchandise outside the particular republic in which it was grown, there is nothing illegal about such plane charters. The Armenian newspaper *Kommunist* (2 July 1963) even carried an Aeroflot advertisement urging 'Organisations and Enterprises' to send their products via Aeroflot. Similar profit-making opportunities have been attractive enough to generate a whole series of illegal manufacturing and distributing activities that have been condemned in the Soviet press.

Because of inefficiency on the part of government manufacturers, transporters, and banks, supplies do not always arrive as scheduled. The imposition of fines, regardless of their size, has so far been of

[8] Professor Liberman has commented about the same problem. *Pravda Ukrainy*, 12 March 1966.
[9] *Ekonomicheskaia Gazeta*, 6 July 1963, p. 40.
[10] *Zaria Vostoka*, 8 June 1963.

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little help. To avoid such disruptions which jeopardise the fulfilment of the purchasing factory's own plan, most plant managers in the USSR try to become as self-sufficient as possible. This deprives them of all the benefits of the division of labour which come from subcontracting. It also means that no one wants to deal with small speciality firms or subcontractors, which are often the source of important innovations in the West. This also explains the absence of consulting firms whose speciality is problem-solving.[11] Such organisations thrive only in a competitive environment where survival depends on ideas that are better than anyone else's.

Ideology has also been responsible for the decision to restrict the use of rent, advertising, flexible prices, and consumer credit. These are now gradually being introduced in an effort to improve the rationality of the Soviet system. In the past their absence has sometimes had a serious impact on the efficiency of marketing operations. For instance, stores have not always been well located.[12] Frequently this has made little difference, because outlets were so few in number that any store with merchandise was able to sell it. With time this has changed. In 1963 a brand new department store called Moskva was opened on Leninskii Prospekt, one of the main streets in Moscow's new southwest suburb. But because of poor land use, in part due to the absence of sensible rent calculation, the Moskva was located away from any major metro or bus interchange, and since most Muscovites do not have their own cars, buyers outside the immediate neighbourhood have to make a special effort to reach it. Moscow trade officials who are used to the crushing crowds at the centrally located TsUM and GUM department stores were shocked to find that sales volume did not reach the expected levels. There have been several reports that the Moskva has regularly operated at a deficit.[13]

When there was little to sell, the absence of advertising was not important. It was only with surpluses that advertising came to be of significance. Because they recognise how much easier their jobs would be with a more advanced form of advertising, marketing officials are now calling for the formation of independent advertising agencies. There have been advertising offices in the Ministry of Trade for several years. Now, however, the call is for an agency in the western sense of the word, with the agency not only preparing the campaign but arranging the placement of the ads in the various media. It is fascinating to read the attempts to find ideological justification for such a step.[14] In terms of simple economics, one of its major benefits is that it will help to reduce inventories.

[11] For a discussion of the need for such firms in the Soviet Union see *Ekonomicheskaia Gazeta*, 29 August 1966, p. 12.
[12] *Sovetskaia Torgovlia*, 16 May 1963, p. 3.
[13] M. Darbinian, 'Assortimenty, Profil i Razmeshchenie Magazinov', *Sovetskaia Torgovlia*, January 1964, p. 25.
[14] *Sovetskaia Torgovlia*, 27 August 1966, p. 3; 7 March 1966, p. 4; 1 December 1964, p. 3.

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The effect of the lack of consumer credit is harder to judge. As long as there was a shortage of goods, the availability of hire-purchase credit would only have intensified the shortage. However, as the supply of goods increased in the late 1950s, greater use of credit would have made it possible for more people to have enjoyed a more comfortable life sooner. As it was, credit was not made readily available until some time after 1960.

Unlike the absence of advertising and hire-purchase, improper pricing practices have had an adverse effect in times both of shortage and surplus. While some provision is made for changes in the demand and supply conditions, these efforts are usually half-hearted and only partly effective. Consequently shortages and surpluses until recently have only seldom been alleviated by price adjustments. As inventories of selected items began to accumulate in the late 1950s, the Russians began to introduce selective price cuts in an effort to clear shelves. These were often effective but occasionally such steps were taken too late. Thus in 1963, despite a series of price reductions, the sale of sewing machines fell 18 per cent as compared to 1962.[15]

Whether or not it is the only reason, Marxist ideology certainly has served as a barrier to many important changes. This does not mean that the Russians have rigidly adhered to all their ideological precepts; when necessary they have compromised with few qualms. When rationing was introduced in the 1930s and again in the 1940s, Commercial Stores were opened for those who had the money to afford it. Rationing was meant to assure equal distribution of food for all; the Commercial Stores were designed to take care of those who had already taken care of themselves. The system of closed shops was also designed to provide more for those in privileged positions. In the mid-1960s, long after the emergency situation had passed, the Soviets opened Valuta Stores (like the old Torgsin Stores) in an effort to increase their earnings of foreign currency. For the majority of Russian people with no access to foreign currency or the delicacies such stores sold, the reopening of these privileged stores must have been a disappointing reminder of a disagreeable past.

The impact of tradition

GIVEN RUSSIA'S TRADITIONAL backwardness in marketing, it is clear that communist ideology in itself is not necessarily responsible for the current state of affairs in the USSR. There is no inherent reason why a communist country must have a trade system as inefficient as the Russians have. Although they are not models of efficiency, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland are closer to the traditions of western Europe, and their marketing sophistication is considerably higher than Russia's. Frequently it is to the Poles, Czechs, East Germans, and

[15] V. Budaragin, 'Sootnoshenie Sprosa i Predlozheniia kak Faktor Tsenoobrazovaniia', *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, May 1964, p. 61.

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Hungarians that the Russians look for advice about distribution techniques such as self-service and advertising. Similarly it was in the relatively more western city of Leningrad that self-service was first brought to Russia in 1954.

Trade in Russia has always suffered because of the low esteem in which the Russians have held salesmen and tradespeople. This attitude is not unique to Russia, but the disdain has been greater there than in the West. (Alexander Gerschenkron ascribes it to the absence of the guild system in Russia. In western Europe the guilds served not only their direct purposes, but also did much to encourage honest practices among artisans and shopkeepers. There were no such self-imposed standards among Russian merchants.) Distrust of the middleman was accentuated by ideology. Marx censured businessmen for unnecessarily stockpiling goods in order to corner the market and increase profits. One direct consequence has been that the Soviets have not paid enough attention to the important economic functions of storage and warehousing. Minimal amounts of capital have been allocated to wholesaling, and wholesaling and warehousing have been highly inefficient. Another consequence is that people of talent have avoided careers in all sectors of trade. Science, production, and even coal-mining have been presented as more attractive and useful, as can be seen in Russian novels, plays, and movies both before and after the revolution. Until 1965, trade personnel were also paid lower wages for their 'less productive' work. Predictably, less talented people give less satisfactory service.

Soviet officials have at last realised the need to bring in better qualified people to the field of marketing. The first step was to raise salaries for Ministry of Trade personnel in 1965. Simultaneously a campaign has been waged to convince Soviet writers and playwrights that tradespeople are not all dishonest or uneducated. Efforts are being made to depict them as heroes instead of villians. The government agreed in 1966 to set aside a special day for tradespeople. Henceforth the fourth Sunday of July is to be known as the Day of the Trade Worker (*Den Rabotnika Torgovli*). Sales clerks now have their own day as construction and railroad workers have long had theirs. This at least is a beginning. But it will take much more than such gestures to bring about an improvement in the calibre of personnel.

The same interplay of history and ideology accounts for the poor service facilities in the countryside. There was never much of a rural store network in Russia. Furthermore Stalin accepted the argument that agriculture should serve as the source of capital or primitive accumulation for industrial development. So, despite promises to make the peasant standard of living equal to that of the factory worker, the distribution network in rural areas has almost always been neglected in favour of facilities in urban centres. Although almost one-half of the Soviet population lived in the countryside in 1964, only a bit more than one-quarter of retail sales were in the rural areas. This was due not only to the lower income of the peasants and the more meagre selection

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of merchandise, but also to the 7 per cent premium in price on most goods sold in the rural co-operative stores. Unlike most co-operative systems, Soviet co-operatives have had a markup rather than a discount on member's purchases. It was only in January 1966 that this unique arrangement was eliminated and the peasants treated in this respect like urban dwellers.

The value of marketing

BY THE LATE 1950s more and more Soviet officials and economists came to realise that the shortcomings in light industry and trade would not be remedied without considerable effort. The heavy industrial structure had been built; now marketing was the bottleneck to further expansion in the rest of the economy. Unless consumer well-being was improved, increased productivity in industry and agriculture would be hampered. The Soviet working man would work harder only if he saw that he was going to gain something of quality in return for his efforts.

The increase in inventories was the most obvious warning signal. After more than forty years, the consumer no longer lived on a hand-to-mouth basis. Production of a growing list of goods had increased enough for the consumer to know that if he did not buy today, he could always find more and perhaps better tomorrow. Previously there was never that certainty. Consequently, if surplus goods like textiles, sewing machines, cameras, watches, electric irons, bicycles, and even washing machines were to be sold, quality would have to be improved and production made more responsive to demand variations. It was also decided, as we saw, to use such non-Marxist techniques as hire-purchase credit, market research, advertising, and trade fairs.[16] These measures have had some success. In 1965 and 1966 the inventory clearances transformed some of the surpluses into shortages. Thus, after years of criticism about the bursting shelves loaded with textiles, ready-to-wear clothing, and shoes, there was now criticism about shortages of these same goods. But the Russians had not solved their problem of demand and supply variations. Despite the poor food harvests of the preceding years, unexpected complaints began to appear at the same time about the formation of certain excess food inventories.[17]

There were many officials with a sincere desire to improve the Soviet standard of living and to make the whole marketing operation more convenient for the consumer. They were intent on improvement for its own sake and were not especially concerned about the need to eliminate inventory gluts. They argued that it was time to design the marketing system to suit the consumer rather than Gosplan or the Minister of Light Industry, and their case was strengthened when economists like

[16] *Ekonomicheskaia Gazeta*, 20 January 1965, p. 34. *Ogonek*, October 1965, p. 4; *Sovetskaia Torgovlia*, 19 April 1966, p. 2.

[17] N. Kononov, 'Poleznaia Kniga', *Planovoe Khoziaistvo*, July 1966, p. 91. *Ekonomicheskaia Gazeta*, no. 21, May 1966, p. 7. *Sovetskaia Torgovlia*, August 1966, p. 60.

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Professor Liberman pointed out that an improved distribution system and better customer service would make it possible for the worker to devote more of his energy to his job than to the task of maintaining his household.

After observing the effect of widespread self-service and prepackaging in the West, the Soviets began to realise that while such methods did indeed increase capitalist profits, they also made possible a saving in time, not to mention an improvement of morale. Few Russian stores had efficient self-service, and the concept of the supermarket is a relatively new one for them. Meat products were generally sold in one store, vegetables in another, and bread in a third. Even then, it was always necessary to stand in several different lines to purchase one item—first to ascertain the price, then at the cash desk to pay and obtain a receipt, and then to pick up the goods. Because many Soviet homes still lack a refrigerator or adequate storage space, the average Soviet housewife has to go through this ritual every day, and since most Soviet women also have regular jobs in addition to their chores as housewives, this leaves them little free time. Soviet sociologists have found that many workers have had to spend as much as 70 per cent of their leisure time on shopping and household chores.[18] As an indication of the time saved by an improved distribution system, one researcher found that 51 per cent of the time devoted to shopping was spent just standing in line, 26 per cent in selecting goods, and the remaining 23 per cent in transit.[19] To spend money on better marketing procedures and improved quality and accessibility of consumer products, would not only raise living standards, but probably increase industrial productivity as well. If the worker can relax when off-duty instead of standing in line, he will probably come to work in a more productive frame of mind.

The second fifty years are the hardest

THIS IS THE SITUATION as the first fifty years of communism draw to a close. Although the Soviets continue to lag behind other industrialised countries, they have made impressive gains. But the gains have brought a whole set of new problems that promise to become even more complex in the next fifty years. The inventory problem has just been a hint of what lies ahead. The Russians may find that the challenge of affluence is just as, if not more frustrating than, the trials of poverty.

Continued affluence will probably mean even greater variability in the marginal propensity to consume. We have already shown how a greater propensity to save has contributed to inventory accumulation. As the sale of consumer durables becomes more important, surges and lags in the rate of spending will become more common and more disruptive. The Soviets have learned the hard way that such problems

[18] *Pravda*, 23 January 1966; I. Iu. Pisarev ed., *Metodologicheskie Voprosy Izucheniia Urovnia Zhizni Trudiashchikhsia* (Moscow, 1962), vol. II, p. 117.
[19] B. I. Bolgov, *Vnerabochee Vremia i Uroven Zhizni Trudiashchikhsia* (Novosibirsk, 1964), p. 62.

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cannot be solved by production alone, especially the kind of production they have had in the past. What they need more than ever is greater flexibility, more innovation, less bureaucracy, and more responsiveness to consumer needs.

Americans especially will be curious to see what happens when the Russians move into the automobile age. When Khrushchev inveighed against the American addiction to the automobile and the attendant traffic jams, highways, and accidents, there were many Americans who approved wholeheartedly of his arguments (that is, as long as they themselves could keep their cars). Now Kosygin has succumbed. Fiat and Renault have agreed to help the Russians produce upwards of 700,000–800,000 automobiles by 1972, as compared with total production of 200,000 in 1965. Because the Soviets have heretofore firmly insisted that they would be spared the consequences of the car, they have made virtually no preparations at all. Consequently the ultimate impact may be even worse than it has been elsewhere. It is true that some Russian cities have broader streets than other European cities, but the country also has a larger population in proportion to road mileage. From a marketing point of view, this will mean gigantic parking problems, as they have made no provision for drive-in service or automobile shopping. This will eventually require millions of dollars for reconstruction, and will also lead to the obsolescence of many small shops and the erection of shopping centres served mainly by cars.

The automobile will also generate an entirely different set of problems for the Soviets. While most of us classify the automobile as a consumer good, it can equally serve as a producer good. Some Russians have already converted their private automobiles into unauthorised taxi-cabs. The automobile can also be used to transport food from one region to another, and should also make possible a whole variety of private business activities such as catering, peddling, or selling door to door across the city. In the United States the automobile is often the key component in the single businessman's operations. The more cars there are, the more mobility such 'businessmen' will have. Eventually it will become very difficult to control such activities.

More cars will necessitate more garages and mechanics. In 1966 there were only eight petrol stations and eight garages in Moscow, and only three petrol stations and one garage in Leningrad. Two more service facilities by 1970 are planned for Moscow. Already automobile service is a serious problem. With hundreds of thousands of new cars on the highways, government service facilities will be greatly overtaxed (which will make it very profitable for the mechanic who decides to repair private cars for a hobby or full time).

In large measure, the need to adjust to the complexities of affluence and mobility is what the Liberman-type of reforms are all about. Of course it is necessary to improve quality and performance in the other sectors of the economy as well. Even in heavy industry, there is widespread recognition of the need for what western businessmen call

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feedback. In other words, the manufacturers and sellers must find out what the customer wants, sometimes even before the customer himself knows he wants it, and then provide it rapidly and conveniently. The famed Russian aircraft designer Oleg Antonov has argued that without feedback Russia's economic problems will never be solved.[20] If inventories are not to accumulate, if quality is to improve, if productivity is to be increased, the Soviet production and distribution systems will have to produce for the customer, not for the statistician.

Changing the fundamental orientation of planners, plant managers, and distributors will not be easy. Moreover, even if it is possible to alter the emphasis on quantity for its own sake, can state-owned industries and stores develop the flexibility and responsiveness they must ultimately have? Western economists argue that because of the bureaucracy which is inevitably a part of state-owned enterprise, such industries and stores can never be fully efficient. Those who disagree point to state-owned companies such as Volkswagen, which until recently had no private stockholders. In reply the critics of nationalised industry argue that Volkswagen was competing in markets with privately-owned firms and therefore had to meet their standards.

The next fifty years will show whether or not state enterprises can generate innovation and efficiency by themselves. It is important to point out that size itself does not necessarily militate against flexibility either in industry or distribution. But while big stores may come up with their own innovations, it would be unfortunate if our economies were dependent only on them for new goods and methods. A major portion of the innovation in marketing has come from the small entrepreneur who introduces his ideas in a small shop. If the idea is a good one (and even sometimes when it is a bad one), it will be speedily adopted in the larger chains. It is hard to see how a state-owned economy can ever generate this kind of small entrepreneurial innovation.

Will the Soviets ever feel they need such innovation badly enough to reintroduce private enterprise? At first the question seems patently absurd. Yet it must be asked if for no other reason than to answer that it is out of the question. Nevertheless, it is never wise in Soviet studies to be too dogmatic about anything. Who would have thought five years ago that the Liberman reforms would have made as much impact as they have? Moreover, the full impact of the automotive age is still to come. As a sign of the future, it is to be noted that the Yugoslavs, generally the pacesetters for the rest of eastern Europe, have already permitted some forms of private enterprise. Perhaps there would not be too much shock if private shops employing no more than a limited number of employees were approved. The return of private trade to Russia should not be too startling. Private enterprise was allowed to flourish during the NEP period. At that time it was permitted in order to prevent further deprivation; today, if permitted, it would only be in a most limited way in order to stimulate greater sophistication.

[20] *Izvestiya*, 25 May 1962.

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SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS ON IRRATIONALITY AND WASTE

Alec Nove

All that is real is rational, HEGEL.
I have been accused of artificially fostering industry. That is absurd. How else can one foster industry? COUNT WITTE.

WHAT does Soviet history tell us of rationality, irrationality, waste? What do these terms mean, anyway?

To an economist of the traditional school, rationality and the free market are synonymous. To act in accordance with the market, reflecting consumer sovereignty, to create institutions in which market relations can develop fully, leads practically by definition to maximising welfare. The logic of such criteria may be found particularly cogently expressed by Abram Bergson in his *Economics of Soviet Planning* and his more theoretical works.

However, there are goals other than economic goals, and these have a rationality of their own. Furthermore, there are economic goals which are not encompassed by the criteria of welfare economics or of optimal allocation of given resources: growth, for instance, or change. Suppose François Perroux advocates an investment policy because it has 'un exceptionnel pouvoir destabilisant' or Celso Furtado favours investment in an irrigation system because it would speed the break-up of feudalism and share-cropping in north-east Brazil. These are examples of issues of development strategy. The criteria are no longer those of welfare economics. In terms of the latter, the policies advocated by Perroux or Furtado are irrational and wasteful, if a higher rate of return could be obtained from another kind of investment.

These points may be obvious, yet our judgment of Soviet decision-making is too often reached by the use of criteria which ignore much of the non-Soviet literature of development economics, as well as elementary common sense, Economic rationality is not always greatly desired anyway. Serfdom, after all, was imposed originally for *raison d'état,* and the authors of the *Ulozhenie* of 1649, which legalised it, would have been quite unmoved by proof (if such was forthcoming) of the higher productivity of free labour, or of the incompatibility of serfdom with any attempt to equate marginal revenue with marginal costs. They were concerned with different objectives. So we had better realise from the first that there are levels of rationality as well as conflicting kinds of rationality. If the state requires assured service and revenues, it might well see logic in a form of organisation which discourages efficient operation of agriculture. All military organisations stress discipline and obedience, to the detriment of other qualities; the resultant micro-irrationalities and waste are known to everyone who has served

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in any army. The waste involved is partly the *cost* of the given system. Yet the system as such serves its purpose. Hegel's words, with which this article opens, are frequently misunderstood. I remember Laski treating them as if they were just part of a conservative logic which led ultimately to the deification of the King of Prussia. Surely Laski was wrong. Hegel's point can be taken to mean that existing institutional arrangements, or any large and significant set of events, have deep underlying reasons, serve a purpose, possess a logic, a rationale. Hegel would scarcely have denied that stupid decisions are taken, or that some institutions outlive their usefulness. He knew, for example, that the Prussian army of 1806 was so ineffective that it fled, thereby proving the irrationality of a system which had worked wonderfully well under Frederick the Great.

This said, let us turn to the problem raised by some relevant moments of Soviet history.

Bukharin, in his *Economics of the Transition Period*, expressed the view that revolutions in general tend to destroy means of production, that they lead to a period of disinvestment. In part this was merely a rationalisation of the chaos prevalent in 1919–21. In part it was a true description of any war. If one blows up a bridge or a factory, this may or may not be militarily rational, but this has nothing to do with economics, whether of the welfare or of the development sort. Because the system that came to be known as 'war communism' was so strongly oriented towards the war, its economic performance cannot be judged by the standards of 'normalcy', or on the implicit assumption that the key elements of war communism would have been introduced even if there were no war. For the *key* element was *prodrazverstka*, the confiscation of peasant surpluses. Lenin, it is true, saw long before the revolution the likelihood of a conflict with the better-off section of the peasantry, as well as the contradiction between the 'petty-bourgeois' attitudes of the bulk of the peasantry and the socialist objectives to which he subscribed. But neither he nor any other Soviet leader could have contemplated a peacetime economic model based on such confiscations. This is not the place for a full discussion of the origins and purposes of the so-called system of war communism. It is sufficient for the present purpose to assert that the civil war and general breakdown exercised a very significant influence on economic policy at this period, that a revolution was still in progress, and that considerations of economic efficiency hardly entered the picture. They should have entered it once the civil war was over. The fact that extreme forms of central control—the nationalisation of small-scale industry and the attempt to tell the peasants what to sow—occurred at the end of 1920 suggests that Lenin and his colleagues had lost their grip on reality, until the shocks of peasant revolts plus Kronstadt led to a policy more attuned to the needs of the time.

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We could conclude that war and revolutions have rationalities of their own, and these generally go with economic waste. Revolutionaries tend to be concerned with principles other than the optimum allocation of scarce resources between competing ends, or else so define ends and means that they disorganise the process of production.

However, this line of thought eventually brings one to another and different consideration. Suppose that we agree that it was economically advantageous for most of the former Russian Empire to remain a single political-economic unit—as it would certainly have been for the Austro-Hungarian Empire to survive as a large free trade area. If we examine the situation confronting Kerensky in the middle of 1917, it would seem that he faced the disintegration of the former Empire; the Ukraine and Transcaucasia, probably Turkestan too, were drifting away. Suppose that Lenin's ideology and centralised party machine kept the bulk of this territory within a single political unit. This could not have been done in the name of economic rationality. Indeed, the more intelligent recent developments of the *simpliste* doctrines of welfare economics have introduced the concept of 'political feasibility' as a constraint. Let us suppose (*pace* Denikin's 'Russia one and indivisible') that Lenin saved the political and so the economic unity of the Russian Empire. He did so while preaching a doctrine which was bound to lead to appalling instances of economic irrationality and waste. Yet the fact that he did it represented an economic advantage which needs to appear somewhere on the ledger. Just as surely, Nigeria is now in process of falling apart, for lack of a unifying principle or party. If it falls apart, this would lead to economic waste (and political strife). The country will not be unified by its economic advisers. It might possibly be unified by a brilliant demagogue, who might well advocate impractical policies which would doubtless cause waste. Yet this would not necessarily be an irrational solution.

Or take a different example. The effect of the Russian revolution on agriculture was without doubt anything but progressive. Commercial estates were broken up, most better-off peasants who had consolidated their holdings under the Stolypin reform lost them, and in much of the country the land went back into the three-field system of strip cultivation. The grip of traditionalism, expressed through the *mir,* was strengthened. This led to a decline in marketings. Was this rational? From the economic point of view the answer seems obvious and negative. But politically there was no choice. Similarly I was told in Mexico that land reform was carried out in grossly excessive haste, in a sense at gunpoint; the guns belonged to the right-wing army generals, who would have speedily liquidated the revolutionaries if these had not immediately armed the peasants and given them land. Here too political-military rationality in a revolutionary situation led directly to economic waste. Examples can be multiplied.

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THE point of these remarks is to urge the need to treat these matters without 'disciplinary' blinkers. It is worth trying to seek a *rationale* in events or policies at various levels, and to relate economic policies to other objectives which have a logic of their own.

This, naturally, in no way involves one in approving the given policy or objective. The late Dr Verwoerd preferred the subjection of the 'Kaffirs' to the possible economic advantages which might follow from their advancement, and this is why he could not possibly hearken to the advice of the Chicago school and eliminate racial discrimination in the name of economic rationality. The Duke of Cambridge, C.-in-C. of the British army in the 1860s, stated that he wished that all his officers be gentlemen, and so gave priority to class structure over military efficiency. To grasp this, however, by no means involves one in any sympathy with the objectives of the Afrikaners or the Duke of Cambridge. In these contexts the warning is superfluous, because the point would seem to be obvious. Yet the author of these lines has had repeatedly to face criticism—some of it from readers of and contributors to *Survey*—to the effect that to explain is to justify or forgive.

But let us move on to the middle twenties. These were years of intense debate among economists, planners, politicians. The best known arguments concerned those which raged around such concepts as 'socialism in one country', 'primitive socialist accumulation', Bukharin's peasant policies. But in addition there was a discussion of the greatest possible interest to historians of economic thought, about investment criteria and development strategy, conducted on a surprisingly high level. Surprising not because the Russians are incapable of high-level thought, but because in no other country had economists previously discussed such problems. Issues such as the relative importance for development of investments in agriculture and industry, in labour-saving and capital-saving projects, in heavy or light industry, the extent to which profitability could or should be a guide to investment decisions—these and other matters were thrashed out in Russia at a time when such issues were totally alien to western economic thought. It is a remarkable and too-easily-forgotten fact that western literature on development problems dates from the end of the second world war.[1] There was nothing which the Russians, Bolshevik or not, could have learnt from contemporary western ideas which bore on the new problem of how the state should dispose of its investment resources so as first to reconstruct and then to expand its industries.

It was realised in the course of these discussions that the criteria of choice, and therefore the very definitions of what constitutes irrationality and waste, are affected by whether one's object is to use

[1] For a valuable study of Russian ideas on investment criteria, see J. M. Collette, *Politiques des investissements et calculs économiques: l'expérience soviétique* (Paris, 1964). Equally valuable, though with a different emphasis, are Erlich's well-known *Soviet Industrialization Debate*, and N. Spulber's *Soviet strategy for economic growth* (Indiana University Press).

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effectively the resources that are available, or to change the economy and society quickly. This issue formed part of the debate between the so-called genetic and teleological schools of planners. Should actions and allocation decisions be based on existing factor proportions and relative scarcities, or should a strategy be devised with the object of breaking out of the straitjacket of given constraints? These issues are now familiar enough. They were new then. The choices actually made were indeed all too often wrong-headed. However, one's criteria of wrong-headedness are by no means clear-cut. Wiles, for example, is convinced that those of Galenson and Leibenstein are quite wrong,[2] and devoted a good deal of space to telling us so. Whether he is right or not is not a question which can be pursued here. Suffice it to say that their doctrines on investment choice in a developing country are not derived from specifically Soviet ideas or experience, but do bear, as Collette has pointed out, considerable resemblance to arguments advanced in 1928 by Feldman and other Soviet advocates of a growth strategy. It is enough at this point merely to establish a prima facie case that there can be a conflict about principles of rationality in the context of growth, even abstracting from revolutionary (or counter-revolutionary) politics. Obviously such a conflict would colour one's views of what constitutes irrationality and waste.

It is in order here to digress and to stress the limitations of much of western economic theory in general, and of growth models in particular, in relation to growth strategy in any real-world situation. These limitations are not by any means due only to the tendency to ignore problems of politics and sociology, though such a tendency does constitute a serious weakness. Theories fail also because the economic assumptions on which they are based are artificial in the extreme. Thus some of the best-known growth models ignore or assume the absence of the following: external economies, economies of scale, technical progress, changes in patterns of demand over time, interdependencies, indivisibilities, uncertainty, the non-homogeneity of the labour force, change in technical coefficients (i.e. of the proportions in which goods are used to make other goods). Even those theories and models which do take into account some of the above points almost always assume the absence of (or take as given) others which are related to them, or else assume that change takes place in some consistent and linear way, although everyone concerned with real-world empirical data knows that this is never the case. For example, technical progress is sometimes assumed to extend equally over all sectors, and a production optimum derived from it is apt to ignore that demand will change too. The criteria of so-called welfare economics implicitly assume that there can be no contradiction between short-term and long-term, that everyone has a 'preference map' which can be discovered and which is unaffected by time, that perfect markets exist, with perfect information and perfect

[2] See his *Political Economy of Communism* (Oxford, 1962).

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foresight, that the rate of interest plays the time-discounting role which the textbooks require, and that any transfer of resources (e.g. to the state by taxation) should be lump-sum payments unrelated either to income (direct taxes) or to expenditure (indirect taxes).[3] I do not wish to suggest that all or even most economists seek to apply, to the real world, theories as remote from reality as these. However, many 'optimising' models and theoretical constructions do suffer from such an excess of abstractions.

Stalin (or Nkrumah, or Sukarno, or Nasser) can be charged with many errors in economic policy, resulting in unnecessary waste of resources. However, they could plead in extenuation that the theories only very slightly caricatured above would hardly have been of much help to them in avoiding their errors.

But we must return to Soviet economic history. The intelligent economists of the twenties were, in the main, in prison in the thirties. Stalin had little time for objective criteria or would-be calculators. Arbitrariness was the order of the day. Amid slogans and campaigns, ludicrous errors were committed, which cost the people dear. The policy of forcible collectivisation was, of course, deliberately chosen, and 'error' is perhaps the wrong word to use in describing it. (For one thing, it is far too mild—the word, not the policy.) However, even given the objectives pursued, miscalculations and mistakes abounded, with consequences too well known to pursue further. Industrial leaps forward also imposed a heavy cost on the economy. Machinery was ordered abroad which rusted in the rain as the buildings were not completed, or was smashed by untrained ex-peasant factory hands. The general atmosphere of strain and terror led to factories being built on foundations which gave way, to systematic neglect of maintenance, a falling-off in quality, and a multitude of other phenomena which add up to irrationality and waste on a tremendous scale. The system reached its nadir in 1933. Jasny has devoted to this period some of his most telling pages.[4] No doubt also the 'Stalin' planning system continued to be irrational, by any reasonable standard, in years in which it succeeded in avoiding the chaos which had characterised the end of the first five-year plan. Let us accept and agree that this was so. What more can be said?

A good deal more can be said, by way of explanation, not mitigation.

One point needs to be made which is not as unfair as it looks at first sight. 1933 was not only a year of confusion and hunger in Russia. It was also the lowest point of the Great Depression. Anyone who has not yet read Galbraith's book of that name is advised to do so. They will find there not only a graphic description of collapse and despair, but also of the utter helplessness and wrong-headedness of the

[3] For a good discussion of these problems see the contribution by L. Pasinetti to *The Econometric Approach to Development Planning* (Amsterdam, 1965), and L. Nath, 'Are formal welfare criteria required?', *Economic Journal*, September 1964.

[4] N. Jasny: *Soviet Industrialization, 1928–52* (Chicago, 1961).

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economists. Keynes had not yet written his *General Theory*. The dominant view—which I was taught by Hayek at the London School of Economics—advocated as a cure for depression a sharp reduction in government expenditure and in wages. I still remember vividly the 'triangle' which he drew on the blackboard to prove that a reduction in wages (and taxes) would be needed to make it profitable for entrepreneurs to increase production and investment (ignoring the fact that lower wages and reduced government spending cut down demand for their products). The dominant financial doctrines of the time could be seen from the evidence given by Montagu Norman, then Governor of the Bank of England, to the Macmillan Committee. It is easy, too easy, to pour scorn on the ideas of economists such as Strumilin or Kovalevsky, of economic politicians such as Kuibyshev or Grinko. But were they really more foolish than their western contemporaries? And did not policies which added up to millions of unemployed cause irrational waste of resources?

Someone will doubtless say: irrelevant, like bringing the Negroes of Alabama into a discussion of Soviet concentration camps. But this would not be a fair comment. Unwise economic policies pursued in country A do not justify or even explain the pursuit of (different) unwise policies in country B. But it is not altogether unfair to say that Herbert Hoover would have been in a weak position in 1932 were he to have lectured Stalin on economic strategy. A debate on the same date between Hayek and Strumilin, had such a thing been conceivable, would no doubt have broken up in disorder, but neither would have greatly helped in the complex task of finding a way out of the perplexities of the time. If one reason for irrational behaviour, in East and West, was the difficulty of charting the right path to follow, this could at least be pleaded as *circonstances atténuantes*.

THIS brings one back to the question, still very much debated, of just what constitutes rationality in a developing country, if one takes as given the decision to industrialise and to grow. This is not to say that the arguments of Colin Clark ('growthmanship', etc.) and other sceptics have no validity, merely that any discussion of rationality or waste *must* be related to some objective or value-judgment, otherwise the discussion would be suspended in mid-air. True, pure welfare economics contains, so to speak, its own criterion. In its terms, an increase in national income is a logical objective, and the market must by definition tell one how best to achieve this result. If profits are higher in agriculture, or real estate, or shoe-cleaning, or night-clubs, than in manufacturing, it follows, by definition, that industrial investment is irrational and wasteful.

However, for reasons which lead one straight into the heart of development economics, this argument is hardly acceptable. If it were, there would be *no* development economics! It is not only Stalin, not only communists, who see in planning a way of substituting deliberate,

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state-directed development for the market mechanism. The arguments are familiar to economists and need not be elaborated here: low-level equilibrium, vicious circle of poverty, lack of entrepreneurial capacity, the interdependence of investments in different sectors, and so on. To these must be added the distortions, common in developing countries, occasioned by social-political unrest, highly imperfect capital and labour markets, inflation, and the like, which encourage entrepreneurs to invest in short-term ventures and real estate. To this mixture must also be added problems of politics, law, and social relations, which do nothing to make the picture any simpler or the issues involved more manageable.

I am well aware that there exists a school of thought which rejects the logic of the above analysis, and obstinately believes in the free market as a solution to all ills. It is unnecessary here to take issue with this view. It was, of course, wholly foreign to the outlook of the communists. It is also rejected by many who are not communists, men like Hirschman, Perroux, Myrdal, Tinbergen, Balogh. Their ideas (which differ in many respects) necessarily involve a view of rationality which is much more difficult to define than the pure free-market version. Thus Hirschman advocates choosing investments by such criteria as 'backward and forward linkages', arguing that some industrial investments have greater effects than others on other industries, which supply or are supplied by the newly created industry. Assessing various investment strategies from this point of view, he comes to conclusions similar to Stalin's doctrine of the priority of heavy industry. He also favours investments which stimulate desirable activities, in the sense of creating disequilibria which give rise to the necessity of further developmental investments. In other words, far from adjusting economic behaviour to the existing scarcities and shortages, one chooses a strategy designed to alter the given situation in a direction deemed desirable by the planners.

All this carries with it certain built-in dangers. When there is a strategy there must be a strategist. The substitution of 'strategic' criteria for market criteria opens wide a door through which demagogues, enthusiasts, and charlatans can walk. Grandiose projects, wasting scarce resources, might well be adopted, and economists who give warning about their unsoundness might be dismissed, or arrested as 'right-wing deviationists'. Their defences will have been gravely weakened by the abandonment of rigorous market criteria, which, as many have rightly pointed out, do impose some discipline and provide a standard of judgment for which words like 'development strategy' are a poor substitute. All this no doubt constitutes a powerful case against planning. Yet it may still be (in my view is still) essential to plan in a manner which does not accept the market as supreme arbiter.

TO some extent this must be obvious to any country. Thus neither the London underground nor the New York subway is financially profitable, but even the most extreme member of the Chicago school

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would hesitate before concluding that they be closed down. Examples are easier to find in developing countries. Agricultural credit banks are always in financial difficulties, but only Peter Bauer drew from this the conclusion (for India) that moneylenders' rates of interest are rational and the official credit policy therefore wasteful. Others would hold that the awakening of the Indian peasants and drawing them in to the money economy are objectives which transcend the profit and loss account of agricultural investment banks. Or, to take yet another example, ' rational ' investment decisions in Brazil lead to such emphasis on labour-saving, in the face of a massive increase in the urban population, that grave social dangers are bound to follow from the growth of an unemployed city mob, in which case maybe they are not as rational as all that.

But this line of argument, although convincing, does leave a great many loose ends. If the London underground (or the New York subway) is to be allowed not to pay its way, what should the charges be? If the rate of interest charged to peasants is not to be determined by the market, is it then to be 10, 4, 1 per cent, or what? And why? In other words, in these and other instances, arbitrariness is facilitated by the absence of a definable rationality. No doubt this is why economists seeking a reputation for rigorous analysis shelter behind artificial assumptions, and why they show a marked preference for market criteria.

Stalin chose a ruthless strategy, imprisoned economists who insisted on having ideas of their own, suppressed discussion. His methods led to the maximisation of the risk of waste, a risk which follows from the assumption of power by any development strategist. Had he not been so anxious to imprison any critics, had he not insisted on treating warning voices as if they were fully paid-up members of a right-wing plot, many of the errors would have been avoided. One supposes that he was influenced by three considerations: first, the will to achieve supreme, unquestioned, despotic power, the pursuit of which has a rationality of its own; second, the fact that he was carrying through a vast piece of social engineering (' the revolution from above '), which also had an inner logic; finally, the vast undertaking of creating a mighty heavy industry in Russia did transcend the available criteria of economic effectiveness. Stalin spoke about the contrast between the rate of return at the level of a single enterprise and the profitability of a given action or investment in relation to the economy as a whole over a long period of time. He quite failed to define what he meant. However, before we mock his failure, we would do well to recall that conflicts between short-term and long-term, between micro-rationality and the growth strategy, can and do exist, and none of us can be happy at the answers so far devised by economists, in the East or West. This, need it be said, is no excuse for Stalin's actions in imprisoning economists, in refusing to calculate, in ordering people to achieve the impossible immediately.

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THE word 'excuse' sets up another train of thought which may be worth following. It relates to certain categories of waste, and involves the concept of necessary, 'determined' (*zakonomerny*) waste—or any other type of policy, action, or inaction.

The point is that certain situations, doctrines, kinds of people, display a tendency to commit or omit certain categories of acts. Thus sergeants tend to be rude to private soldiers. Bureaucrats behave in bureaucratic ways. An economic bureaucracy—for example the British wartime civil service—acted in ways which are explicable in the circumstances, but which occasioned numerous instances of waste and irrationality. Many of the individual instances of error could, no doubt, be avoided, but even they fit into the *system* of bureaucratic control, and this system therefore carries with it the tendency to certain species of micro-irrationality—connected with fear of precedent, fear of parliamentary questions, the desire to appear to be fair, the need to apply general rules which do not fit particular cases, and so on. Everyone who worked in the Civil Service knows that many such cases occurred. Why, then, did we not run the war economy on a free-market basis? Why not allow the manufacturers of private cars and refrigerators to compete for scarce resources with the manufacturers of guns and bombers? Would this not have avoided many kinds of nonsense? And was not the nonsense that occurred similar in many respects to that encountered in Stalin's Russia? Anyone who doubts this has only to read Ely Devons's *Planning in Practice*. Success indicator distortions and *shturmovshchina* were well known in wartime Britain. So? So no one seriously advocated correcting these irrationalities, eliminating this kind of waste, at the cost of disregarding the priority of war needs. That is to say, waste and micro-irrationalities were accepted as part of the *cost* of enforcing a particular pattern of priorities by administrative decision. One consequence was so drastic a distortion of the functioning of the price mechanism that the government was unable to calculate which of many alternative courses would most effectively meet the government's own economic requirements. Yet this too was accepted as unavoidable.

Lange once described the Soviet method of crash-programme industrialisation as '*sui generis* a war economy'. The parallels are close. One has only to add at this point a quotation from a middle-of-the-road American development economist, Benjamin Higgins: 'For a short time the present writer was engaged in wartime planning, and he has been struck since by the similarity between the *nature* of the problem confronting economic planners during the war and in underdeveloped countries. . . . "Total war", like planning development of poor and stagnant economies, involves marked and discontinuous structural changes, and resource allocation without reference to the market.' [5]

Mention of war must remind one of what Stalin's ghost would surely have said earlier: that the harsh priorities of the early five-year plans

[5] *Economic Development* (New York, 1959), p. 453.

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were due to an anxiety to build up heavy industry as a basis of military strength as quickly as possible, and that the autarkic tendency of the time also had a strategic purpose. Far be it from me to argue that this 'justified' the mad tempi and extremes of the economic policies of the period. However, Count Witte, who also stressed the priority of heavy industry for military reasons, would have understood the need 'artificially to foster' such industries. Had he lived through the first world war, and seen creeping paralysis overtake Russian industry and transport owing to its reliance on imported machinery and components, he would have been confirmed in his ideas. Even the most orthodox economists would probably agree that military preparations have a rationality of their own. The creation of capacity to produce guns is not any less legitimate an objective than, let us say, an advertising campaign designed to persuade American housewives that they must throw away their refrigerators or cars in order to buy the very latest model. (Does the American economy generate vast and conspicuous waste in this sense? Some would assert that it does, but this raises issues which fall outside the scope of these random thoughts.) Anyway, the use of war-economy methods in peacetime to make the means of waging war in wartime is not wholly illogical, and it is only right to mention that Stalin's speech in his own defence, if we can imagine one, would make this point.

But let us return to the concept of 'determined' waste. This needs to be refined a little. There is, first, the unavoidable consequence of a given way of doing things. One instance would be the delays and frustrations of having to apply for import licences, if controls on foreign trade exist. Or, to take a Russian example, the tendency for managers to try to fulfil quantitative output targets is an integral part of the Stalin model, and so such behaviour is not a human error, but the equivalent of profit maximisation in the western system, an essential part of the motivation which makes it work. But in the name of plan fulfilment there are whole categories of actions taken which everyone from Kosygin to a rank-and-file citizen would agree to describe as wasteful and pointless. In his excellent pamphlet criticising the traditional Soviet planning system, O. Antonov [6] makes the point that such errors are so completely within the system that directors can be visualised as fish swimming in an element of which such behaviour is an essential part, so much so that a director who succeeds in behaving differently must be seen as a fish which had momentarily jumped out of the water. In other words, given the existence of system A there follows consequence B, necessarily, almost by definition. If B is or contains a negative phenomenon, it is part of the 'cost' of system A.

But planners, managers, politicians, are not only fish, or trams in preordained grooves, to change the image. They do exercise choice. A second category of actions must now be identified: that which can be,

[6] *Dlya sebya i dlya vsekh.*

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and often is avoided, but for which there is a predisposition in the given system.

We can all think of examples of this. Thus, to take a totally non-political instance, serfdom or slavery leads to the masters taking advantage of serf or slave girls. Pushkin wrote:

Zdes devy yunye tsvetut
Dlya prikhoti razvratnovo zlodeya

But of course it does not follow that any given landlord is under an impersonal compulsion to assault any peasant girl, and so the identification of this kind of *zakonomernost* (propensity, regularity) in no way affects the responsibility of any man for his actions. Landlords were free to repress their baser instincts. Similarly, the officers of the British army, given their background and training, were bound to be less professional and less efficient than the German general staff in the 1914 war. A propensity to make mistakes (or more mistakes than the Germans) thus existed, but it does not mean that Haig *had* to order the continuation of the Passchendaele offensive in 1917, or that he was inherently incapable of so placing his reserves that they would help the Fifth Army in March 1918. Or, to take an economic example, if British businessmen tend to be products of minor public schools, it may be that they find it difficult to communicate with their men and this causes difficulties for British industry; naturally, this does not mean that bad labour relations necessarily occur in any given factory or office. Or, to cite one last example, import controls give rise to the possibility of bribery, and in certain societies this possibility becomes a probability.

From both the above categories could be derived the useful concept of necessary consequential actions which in some circumstances give rise to systematic error or waste, these being either the logical and inescapable consequence of given organisational arrangements (if A then B), or consist of a propensity to certain kinds of behaviour which is built into the structure (if A, then B is likely to happen, probably happens, could often happen).

Thirdly and finally, there is also another category of acts, irrationalities, omissions, which do not have a close or necessary connection with the given system, unlike those cited above, but which *could* occur, and against which the system in question has little defence if they do. Thus Ivan the Terrible had half the population of Novgorod murdered. This was so exceptional an act that it can hardly be called inherent in absolutism. But an absolute autocrat could—if he had a peculiar character—order such acts, and they would be carried out. Stalin's slaughter of the central committee, and of many thousands besides, might fall under this head.

OBVIOUSLY, the line between these categories is blurred, and particular instances can be disputed. Thus some historians would 'promote' Stalin's slaughter of the central committee from the third to the second group. Yet the distinctions are worth bearing in mind. They

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are relevant to one's judgment of what constitutes rational or wasteful acts. All this is connected with the analysis of systems and of related sub-systems, and of the contradictions which arise constantly in real economic and political life between different objectives simultaneously pursued. From standpoint X, Y is undesirable and even wasteful. But to achieve objective Z, Y is necessary, or useful, or the risk of Y is inherent in trying to achieve Z, or action to stop Y would be held to constitute a threat to objective Z. Let us, for instance, agree that the forcible depopulation of the Highlands and the creation of slums in Lancashire were phenomena which were undesirable, and we can so define welfare economics that even orthodox economists could be brought to agree that these things were in the long run economically wasteful. Yet both were by-products, so to speak, of the way in which the rights of property were held sacred in the nineteenth century. It is quite arguable that the great advances of that century required that these principles be held sacred, and in the name of these principles Parliament was right to ignore the protests of the Scottish crofters and representations concerning dark Satanic mills.

A Russian citizen once said to me: 'Stalin was dreadful indeed. But do you think that we would have held out, in the terrible year 1942, without both his terroristic discipline and the religious faith in him?' When in reply I pointed to his disastrous errors, the generals he killed and the bitterness he caused, the Russian said: 'Yes, I know all that. There are pluses and minuses. As the statisticians say, it is a question of weighting. Only how does one weight such things? That is the problem.'

Applying this to the economics of the Stalin era, conscious of the appalling waste which characterised the period, one is conscious also of our inability to find adequate criteria for judgment. How does one compare the achievements, which were great, with the cost, which was appalling? How does one identify those elements of the cost which were an integral part of the achievements (e.g. big investments equals big sacrifices), and distinguish them from the consequences of greater and lesser degrees of arbitrariness? How much of the arbitrariness was linked with the very existence of a one-party state and centralised planning, and how much was due to Stalin's peculiarities of character and to individual errors and/or aberrations? To point out the difficulties in the way of answering such questions is also to raise issues affecting both historiography and the assessment of economic policies in general. Stalin's terror and Stalin's despotism, to repeat, led to waste of resources on a vast scale, but merely to demonstrate that this was so does not answer the question. Thus almost every developmental statesman has a marked predilection for prestige projects. Stalin had too. It is true that there is a developmental rationality in prestige projects as such; they highlight the achievements, show something tangible and conspicuous as the result of sacrifices endured. Some economists see this. But there is a limit to all things, and Stalin went much too far. Some very

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irrational attempts were made to 'transform nature', dig unnecessary canals, build a railway in the Arctic which never functioned (referred to in 'Mertvaya doroga', *Novy mir*, No. 8, 1964). Other forms of waste abounded. Despite Swianiewicz's attempt to demonstrate the contrary, the forced labour system might surely also be adjudged economically wasteful, though there was some logic in causing fear of arrest as one means of suppressing discontent with low consumption and high investment, and one supposes that fear of arrest cannot be very effective unless many people are in fact arrested. (I hope in parenthesis that no one will wish to accuse me of justifying mass arrests!) The deportation of real or alleged kulaks deprived Russian agriculture of its energetic and ambitious husbandmen, and the cost of this measure, which was not repeated in any other country, was felt for a generation at least. The list could very easily be prolonged, and one must again repeat that the irrationalities were very real indeed, and there is no doubt in my mind that many of them were not the necessary or unavoidable consequences of the centralised planning model, though some were intimately related to the nature of the men who formed the party machine, the ideas they had, the logic of 'revolution from above', a logic with deep roots in the fact of a Bolshevik revolution in a peasant country.

It is also relevant to point out the inadequacy, in the context of the present argument, of our measure, not only of costs, but also of results, of the achievements. I devoted a chapter to this in a book of essays,[7] and will refer to this matter very briefly here. Essentially, the point is that a criterion which measures success by growth statistics is apt to be misleading. This is partly due to the success indicator problem (enterprises adjust the product mix to growth statistics, instead of to need, so that aggregate measurement fails to measure correctly the use-value of what is produced). It is due also to the systematic rewarding of producers of intermediate goods and services for what amounts to waste. The point is often overlooked and is worth spelling out. Given a desired end-product, common sense tells one that it should be made with the least expenditure of goods and services, i.e. of means to the given end. However, the enterprises and ministries providing means (e.g. metal goods or transport services), are also rewarded for increased quantity, for growth of output. They therefore endeavour to maximise the weight of metal produced, or the ton-kilometres of freight carried, and, in so far as it depends on them, they avoid and resist economies in metal and transportation. It is one of the objects of the present reforms to change all this. However, the statistical effects of this species of waste need not show up as a loss. On the contrary, it forms part of the output of industry and transport, and so of national income. Metal used up in the output of cars is double-counted in the gross industrial output index, and the use of less metal would result, *ceteris paribus*, in less

[7] 'Economic irrationality and irrational statistics', in *Was Stalin really necessary?* (London, 1965). See also M. Polanyi's interesting 'Towards a Theory of Conspicuous Production', *Survey*, October 1960.

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growth of output. Even for national income purposes, though the double-counting is eliminated, the unnecessary metal is not shown as wasted, since it is part of the value of the car, and the extra metal-works required to produce the extra metal show up as real resources, along with the machines, buildings, and railway haulage to which its existence gives rise. As for transport, any movement of goods in ton-kilometres is included in national income in any country, whether it is needed or not.

Soviet critics of the Stalin planning system have been pointing this out. They have argued inter alia that the wide gap between the increase in output of consumer goods and that of producer goods may be due not to Marxist-Leninist economic laws, but simply to waste in the sense referred to above. Wrong investment decisions lead to excessive output of means in relation to ends, of intermediate goods in relation to final products. If B can be made with inputs worth A, and in fact 2A are used, through error or inadvertence, then this is an irrationality to be corrected.

FOR familiar reasons, the virtues of the Stalin economic system are now deemed to be outweighed by its defects; its cost has become intolerable. This change in Moscow's assessment of the system can be attributed to a number of factors:

(a) The cost, in terms of irrationalities and waste, has risen as the economic structure has become more complex, more sophisticated, larger. In this sense, its own success in achieving growth has undermined the system.

(b) The 'war economy' approach to industrialisation has some rational purpose in an economy which is not only on a low level of development, but also one in which a few key priorities can be clearly defined and strongly enforced. Since Stalin's death, priorities have been diluted and the enforcement mechanism weakened.

(c) The end of terror has allowed the criticisms of long-existing irrationalities to find expression, which it is politically dangerous to ignore, and which indeed find their reflection high up in the party hierarchy, which cannot be seen as insulated from what happens and is said below it.

(d) The revolution is fifty years old. As a revolution it is over. Its rationalities, its logic, have little further relevance, so far as economic organisation is concerned. Formal ideology affects the language or forms of proposed changes. Thus Marx is combed for suitable quotations, and Lenin's views of NEP so redefined as to make him the protagonist of market socialism, a view contradicted by those who fear that the reform movement may go too far. However, the pursuit of strict economic rationality has evidently grown in importance in recent years, as political-revolutionary factors have receded.

(e) This does not eliminate political considerations from economic decision-making. Far from it. There is no country, communist or anti-

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communist, in which economic rationality is not sometimes sacrificed to non-economic desiderata. Political vested interest, human ambition and conflicts, all play a role. The communist party machine, while no longer a monolithic organ with only one set of interests, does have a view of its functions which is inconsistent with economically rational forms of decision-making, just as in political and administrative matters it tends to confuse the issue by duplicating governmental organs at various levels. However, it seems to me that even political and personal interest usually requires to be linked with a recognisable and defensible purpose. One cannot conceive of a speech by Brezhnev in which he would say: 'Comrades, we are useless, we could be replaced by the civil service and the market mechanism, but we must avoid any reform which threatens our continued supreme power.' Naturally, people have great capacity for self-delusion about their own indispensability, but this is not limitless. Intolerable muddle cannot long be tolerated merely because it suits the careers of ambitious men, the more so as another ambitious man may make *his* career by proposing to correct known deficiencies. Stalin must have been fortified in his arbitrariness by the not unfounded belief that arbitrariness was necesary and the 'rationality' criteria of economists inadequate. But Brezhnev and Kosygin seem to lack this conviction, and their inner doubts affect their behaviour. This is affected also by the attitudes of their subordinates, of experts, of influential strata of public opinion, which are conscious of the need for change and impatient of avoidable resource misallocation. Stalin's grip was due not only to police terror, but also to a belief that he was in some respects doing a necessary job, albeit in an excessively brutal way. 'Someone had to rob the peasants to build a mighty industry, and it is Stalin's great service to Russia that he did this'; so spoke a bitter emigré who hated his guts.

So the irrationalities and waste inherent in (or consequent upon) the domination of political despots over the economy may be coming to an end, or rather will be altered in scope and extent. The politicians may now be ready to act more in their capacities as managing directors of USSR Ltd., than as leaders of a political party, though at all times they have had both these functions. An established industry, trained managerial cadres, industrial ways of thought, should now lead to a situation in which conflicts between developmental strategy and more familiar kinds of economic rationality will become fewer, and may even be partly resolved by the computer.

It does not follow, of course, that Brezhnev and Kosygin will necessarily make the necessary changes. They may resist, as they may also resist the trend towards a cultural détente and greater freedom of expression. But if they do, they will be trying to sail in the teeth of a wind of change, and, like the commanders of the Prussians in 1806, they could discover that methods which had their rationality and purpose a few decades earlier have outlived their usefulness. They probably know this, and this is why reforms will surely, if slowly, be adopted.

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CHANGES IN ECONOMIC THOUGHT

Alfred Zauberman

THERE is more than one reason why the first half century of Soviet economic thought, just coming to its close, should have its special fascination for a student. It represented a dramatic break with the Russian heritage in this field and thereby with the mainstream of post-Ricardian thought; it included the groping for a theoretical scaffolding suitable for a new social-economic system; the determination to build it upon a Marxian foundation; the search for a planning doctrine attuned to the kind of planning that was being empirically evolved with hardly any positive help from Marxian economics; more generally, the correlation of economic thought with the specific economic environment and the economic strategy pursued at different times. Here it is possible to deal with only a few of the many aspects which attract the student.

On the eve of the Revolution there were close links with western economic thought; one was the quest for some symbiosis of Marxian and Ricardian elements with contemporary trends in the West. This is true of both Tugan-Baranovsky and Struve, two eminent Russian economists. Struve in particular tended to look to Marx for a broad sociological background. For fundamental economic concepts he turned to Ricardo, and tried to combine this with rigorous analysis borrowed from the mathematicians and the Austrians. Complementarity of the labour theory of value and the marginal-utility theory was one of his principal tenets.[1] At the same time the irreconcilability of Ricardo with the Marxian propositions on 'socially necessary labour', on value resting on the average labour content, was already recognised in Russian economics, especially—at the turn of the century—by the mathematician Dmitriev[2] (the matter was to become a major issue decades later). Moreover, 'subjectivist' tendencies were making a strong impact on Russian thinking in various areas of economics: an outstanding original Russian contribution was the pioneering work on demand analysis published by Slutsky on the eve of the Revolution.[3]

Of great interest too is the strong impact made by the Marxian macro-economic approach *as such* in directing pre-revolutionary thought towards problems of economic growth. It should be borne in mind that in the pre-Keynesian world Marx had a virtual monopoly as a source of inspiration for such an approach. His formulation of the growth model was taken up and extended at the turn of the century in Russian writing.

[1] M. Tugan-Baranovsky, *Osnovy Politicheskoy Ekonomii* (Petrograd, 1915), p. 549.
[2] V. K. Dmitriev, *Ekonomicheskie Ocherki* (Moscow, 1898).
[3] E. Slutsky, 'Sulla teoria del bilancio del consumatore', *Giornale degli Economisti*, no. 1, 1915. Cf. my 'Remarks on a Discovery in Soviet Economics', *Bulletin* of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, no. 4, 1962.

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The significance of the model was recognised by Tugan-Baranovsky (who, incidentally, deduced from it the rule of faster advance of the producer-goods sector as a condition of the growth of the system).

Naturally, the Bolshevik revolution tended to give a dominating position to Marxian teaching. To be sure, the retreat from War Communism and the subsequent experiment in mixed economy revived links with western economics. The work by Bazarov and Yushkov may be taken as characteristic for the epoch.[4] In the mid-twenties Bazarov designed a noteworthy scheme for a mixed system, a system with two sectors of which only one would obey strict rules of profitability: a considerable area of operation would be reserved for a market mechanism in the allocation of resources. In dealing with their efficient employment, Yushkov returned to the order of ideas of pre-1917 economics; his approach was marginalist par excellence, and with him economic calculation rested on opportunity costs. Moreover, except for the lack of rigour of his apparatus, his work contains in embryo a remarkable anticipation of the optimality concepts which were given formal shape only a decade later.

At the same time—during the twenties—the question of the scope for economic science under socialism, and indeed of its very *raison d'être*, was becoming the subject of a major controversy. This was related to the cardinal practical problem—the area of freedom of action for the planning State. In philosophical terms—the fashion at the time—it marked the battlefield of two camps, the 'teleologists' versus the 'geneticists'. The central question—often framed as that of the survival of economic law in post-capitalist society—was answered positively by those who argued that the plan should and could in essentials be derived from extrapolation of time series. This was the opinion of the chief protagonist of the genetic view, Bukharin.[5] (It has a close affinity with conceptions which were to obtain currency a quarter of a century later, when indicative planning was taken up in capitalist countries, and with the idea of a plan-prognosis which today has penetrated the theory of Soviet-type normative planning, with the probabilistic approach introduced by the mathematicians.) Others contended that, in the dialectical process of an economy's transformation from capitalism to socialism, the mode of operation of economic law would also be transformed, and economics would turn from a descriptive into a prescriptive discipline.[6] In the mid-twenties Preobrazhensky proclaimed that the beginning of disintegration of economic law had actually begun.[7] The teleological extremists insisted that socialism entailed the inexorable dissolution of economic law, spelling the doom of economics as an analytical science.

[4] V. Bazarov, 'Printsipy postroienia perspektivnogo plana', *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, no. 2, 1928; L. Yushkov, 'Osnovnoy vopros planovoy metodologii', *Vestnik Finansov*, no. 10, 1928.
[5] N. Bukharin, *Kritika Politicheskoy Platformy Oppozitsii* (Moscow, 1928).
[6] B. Khmelnitskaya, in *Ekonomicheskoe Obozrenie*, no. 3, 1925.
[7] E. Preobrazhensky, *Novaya Ekonomika* (Moscow, 1926. Engl. translation *The New Economics*, London, 1965).

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This was the school that gained supremacy by the end of the twenties—on the threshold, that is, of the planning epoch.

Looking back we recognise this as the first instance of a process which was to be repeated in the history of Soviet thought—the process of its reacting to the requirements of economic life rather than shaping it. This is borne out by what happened in the theory of economic growth. Growth became *the* cardinal issue. Soviet official doctrine, invoking the authority of Marx and Lenin, adopted as the cornerstone of its growth strategy the well known principle of preferential development in the producer-good sectors. Decades later—in the sixties—the support of the classics for this proposition came to be questioned; and perhaps legitimately.[8] Moreover, a stricter analysis has brought out a host of assumptions which condition and circumscribe the universal validity of the principle. In particular it has been shown that the validity of the principle turns on the prevailing type of technical progress.[9] Some of the assumptions which rob the principle of generality were patently not realised either by Marx or by Lenin.

However, there is every reason to believe that the emphasis on producer goods was decisive for the vast expansion of the Soviet industrial potential. This is *a fortiori* tenable in respect of the Soviet reformulation of the precept that growth promotion must be centred on a few selected leading links. What on the face of it would seem to have been irrational growth for growth's sake was given its rationale in Soviet literature a quarter of a century later in the rigorous terms of the von Neumann model,[10] that is, a model in which consumption as such is to be minimised.

What would be unacceptable, however, is the postulate of growth being necessarily of a balanced kind. The fate of the Feldman model—now rescued from oblivion and famous—is illuminating. Persuasive in the logic of its growth mechanism—its affinity with Domar-Harrod has been shown by Domar himself—the model was out of tune with its epoch.[11] True, Feldman did not identify dynamic equilibrium with optimality of growth. In fact he did consider variants of unbalanced growth both for a steady and an accelerated pace, and he related them to the given conditions (structure of the economy, varying factor productivities, required consumption levels and so on). But whatever its merits, an analysis which presented a set of viable alternatives to the economic strategist disqualified itself at that particular time. It did so in any case by bringing into relief the constraints which circumscribe the planner's area of manoeuvre. This is true also of several other analyses produced

[8] L. I. Dovgan, *O Tempakh Rosta Dvukh Podrazdelenii Obshchestvennogo Proizvodstva* (Moscow, 1965).

[9] O. Lange, *Teoria Reprodukcji i Akumulacji* (Warsaw, 1961).

[10] J. von Neumann, 'A Model of General Economic Equilibrium', Engl. translation in *Review of Economic Studies*, no. 33, 1945-46.

[11] G. A. Feldman, 'K teorii tempov narodnogo dokhoda', *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, no. 11, 1928, and *ibid*, no. 12, 1929; E. Domar, *Essays in the Theory of Economic Growth* (New York, 1957).

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at the time, for example Kondratiev's criticism of the first plan.[12] Strumilin, in his first attempts at plan construction in the twenties, inclined towards the non-equilibrium school; in the mid-thirties he produced a design for a 'national economy balance' which would form the basis of a long-range plan.[13] The idea was unacceptable to those responsible for economic strategy; today it can be seen that it was premature. *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, which published the model, had to apologise editorially (1937, no. 4) for its blunder in printing a construct which was described as counter-revolutionary.

The question of timing also provides the explanation of the abandonment of the Soviet pioneering effort of the twenties in the field of industry (input-output) analysis.[14] Here again one of the handicaps was a (static) general equilibrium approach. The economic system could be viewed only as one of overall equilibrium. When Popov's remarkable attempt is thought of in these terms, one finds it less surprising that further work in this pioneering exploration was left to an economist abroad (W. Leontief): at the time it was evolved, it too was out of touch with the needs of its native land, for this was a period when efforts had to be concentrated on selected objectives. Theoretical economics could offer little help in this selection, indeed not even in its principles: growth promotion would have largely to rely on the arbitrary, more or less intuitive judgment of the policy makers. In fact, in a strikingly short time, Soviet practice designed its own very rough methods and crude instruments to operate the fairly primitive kind of planning and controls required in the given milieu with a given strategy. In such circumstances economics was perforce 'de-theorised'. Indeed it lost virtually all its theoretical content. This explains the poverty of Soviet economic thought precisely at a time when the economy itself was passing through a phase of spectacular change and advance.

SOME TIME around the turn of the thirties the need for objective criteria in the calculations underlying the plan came to be increasingly felt, and this led to a renewal of theoretical reasoning.

Once again fundamental matters were debated within the familiar framework of the scope of economic laws under socialism. It was now acknowledged that 'objective necessity' existed in any social-economic system, and that it changed with changes in the system. Under socialism it would operate as a 'conscious necessity': the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and of entrepreneurship would make it objectively necessary to replace the forces of the market by planning, while scarcity of resources would make it imperative to adopt the socialist (as distinct from the communist) laws of distribution.[15]

[12] D. N. Kondratiev, 'Kriticheskie zametki o plane razvitiya narodnogo khoziaystva', *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, no. 4, 1927.
[13] S. G. Strumilin, *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, nos. 9–10, 1936.
[14] *Balans Narodnogo Khoziaystva SSSR 1923/24* (Moscow, 1926).
[15] A. Leontiev, *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, no. 6, 1947.

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Broadly speaking, this would imply the use of economic calculus, that is, commodities would have to have a common measure of value. The question was, how was this to be done? In the forties, Voznesensky [16] answered this question by saying that in socialist society the price of a commodity is based on its value and hence on production costs: that value under socialism corresponded to the actual amount of social labour used up in production. And, typically, Voznesensky drew the conclusion which exploded his argument: the socialist state determines the prices in the interest of strengthening socialism. Voznesensky was unable to offer an answer to the problem he was able to pose: perhaps it was too early for an answer.

As the break-through phase of growth was coming to an end, the methods of running the economy had again to be re-adjusted. A search for more refined techniques began. While still lacking a clear theoretical basis, Soviet economics followed suit and gradually oriented itself towards the use of money as the measure of value.

The search for the correct method of pricing was reflected in the debate among the economists in the fifties, once again carried out in terms of the operational principle for the law of value under socialism. At one extreme the Strumilin school postulated a price strictly based on the Marxian variant of the labour theory of value; at the other the Vaag-Malyshev school argued in favour of the 'production price'—the *Produktionspreis* in Marx's analysis of the competitive capitalist market.[17] Before the controversy could lead to any definitive conclusion, the limitation of its conceptual framework was revealed. Not surprisingly for an economy so strongly directed to expansion, the groping for an objective measure of value was expressed with particular strength, and at a fairly early stage, in the discussion of the relevance of the time factor in measuring values. Here the appearance, in the mid-forties, of Strumilin's celebrated paper on the measurement of investment efficiency—his argument related to depreciation of product over time due to rising factor productivity—was a milestone.[18] This method was later elaborated and, though rough, it contributed to the awareness of the acute and complex problem of efficiency.

While Soviet economic thinking gravitated increasingly towards the wider employment of money-term instruments as efficiency instruments, the problem of efficiency was not really understood. The point is that under a direct-centralist regime there is little harm from a non-efficiency price. It is only when an attempt is made to shift to the indirect variant

[16] N. Voznesensky, *The War Economy of the USSR* (Moscow, 1947).

[17] For Strumilin's view see in particular *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, no. 12, 1956, and *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, no. 2, 1957. For Vaag's view see in particular *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, no. 8, 1957; no. 4, 1958; no. 9, 1958, p. 113; for Malyshev's *Voprosy Ekonomiki*, no. 3, 1957, and no. 9, 1958, and *Planovoe Khoziaystvo*, no. 7, 1957. Cf. my 'Law of Value and Price Formation', in G. Grossman, ed., *Value and Plan* (Berkeley, 1960).

[18] G. Strumilin, 'Faktor vremeni v proektirovkakh kapitalnykh vlozhenii', *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk SSSR*, no. 3, 1946.

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of centralism, a variant under which the centre controls the economy by means of orders coded in prices of factors and goods, that the question of efficient steering with such instruments becomes crucial.

The growing maturity of the economy has accentuated the issue, and has turned Soviet thinking in this direction. Theoretical attitudes adopted for a phase of extensive growth have gradually outlived their usefulness. And reasoning confined to the use of the Marxian apparatus has been helpless where a framework for handling the efficient growth equilibrium was needed.

AT this point Soviet economics began again, in many crucial fields, where it had left off at the beginning of the thirties. It has tried to avail itself of the advances which mathematics have made in the meantime in areas carrying a promise to the economic planner. Soviet economics has by now become ready to be ' re-theorised '.

In the new climate it has turned in the first place to Leontief's input-output method, since this offered immediate help in imparting a general equilibrium approach to national planning as well as the use of powerful computational apparatus.[19] It was even more remarkable to find the roots of a mathematical formulation and solution of the more generalised problem of the optimal (efficient) equilibrium in Soviet work as early as the turn of the thirties. At the time its meaning escaped the attention of Soviet economists.

In evolving the mathematical formulation, Kantorovich laid the foundation of programming theory, the discipline concerned with the theory of constrained maxima and minima. He did so in his construction of the comparatively simple, linear form. (Recently the claim has been advanced that he formulated, and even designed, as early as 1940, a computational method for a relatively general non-linear programme as well.)[20]

Programming is in substance the mathematical formulation of rational decision-making in pursuit of adopted goals. It is in this sense a theory of planning; significantly, its use in economic planning and control was stressed by Kantorovich in the very title of his pioneering 1939 paper: ever since the work of his school has been ' plan-oriented '.

Kantorovich's work brought into Soviet economics the idea of duality. As often happens with ideas of genius, once acclimatised they seem almost self-evident. The gist of his idea is that in every linear optimisation problem, the maximisation is tied to minimisation, and vice versa.

[19] W. W. Leontief, *The Structure of American Economy 1919-39* (second ed., New York, 1951).

[20] L. V. Kantorovich, *Matematicheskie Metody Organizatsii i Planirovaniya Proizvodstva* (Leningrad, 1939); its main impact on Soviet economic thinking dates from its republication in V. Nemchinov, ed., *Primenenie Matematiki v Ekonomicheskikh Issledovaniakh* (Moscow, 1959). L. V. Kantorovich, ' Ob odnom effektivnom metode resheniya nekotorykh klassov ekstremalnykh zadach ', Academy of Sciences of the USSR, *Doklady*, 1940, vol. 28, no. 3.

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The economic interpretation indicates that a set of 'objectively conditioned valuations' ('solving multipliers' in Kantorovich's original work) is inherent in the optimum solution, and this has a patent implication for pricing. Of special relevance for the habitual Soviet frame of economic thinking in these matters is the point incisively made by Baumol: 'the dual problems turns out to have an extremely illuminating economic interpretation which incidentally shows that old-fashioned marginal analysis is always implicitly involved in the search for an optimal solution of a linear programming problem'.[21] (I would add that at the same time the programming formulation is closer to reality than old-fashioned marginal analysis.) True, Kantorovich in his original work of 1939 did not provide a very effective computational method (that had to wait for the development of the simplex algorithm in the forties by Dantzig). But he did throw new light on pricing as related to efficient planning. His work, supported by a strong mathematical apparatus, was paralleled chronologically by Novozhilov's contribution[22]: a contribution also of signal importance though resting on purely logical argument or arithmetical example or simple algebra. (Years later Ragnar Frisch translated Novozhilov's formulation of a principle of 'feedback' inter-relations into the language of modern programming theory.)

As one would only expect, ideas so utterly unfamiliar—indeed in irreconcilable conflict with the established way of thinking—met with determined opposition from Soviet economists. Novozhilov's point of departure was condemned as 'a non-historical concept of "maximum effect with minimum outlay", a concept long since unmasked in Marxian literature'. His approach to problems of productivity of capital and growth was dismissed as 'Keynesian'.

But these ideas could not be long suppressed. In the later fifties they came to the surface again and with greater strength; and once again they came under fire from the orthodox. Kantorovich's conceptions were by that time twenty years old, but only when decoded from mathematical into 'literary' terms was their message understood. His ideas, as well as Novozhilov's, were now lumped together and subjected to a barrage: both were reproached for being trapped by Say's concept of factors and of services rendered by capital, and for coming dangerously close to western marginalism. The inventor of programming had to resort for a time to Galileo's tactics. The criticism was correct in stressing the incompatibility of the new and the established ideas but it was anachronistic.

What is impressive is not the resistance to these novel ideas, natural as it was to the Soviet economist's orthodox mode of thinking, but

[21] W. J. Baumol, *Economic Theory and Operations Analysis* (second ed., Englewood Cliffs, 1965), p. 103.

[22] V. V. Novozhilov, 'Metody nakhozhdeniya minimuma zatrat v sotsialisticheskom khoziaystve', Leningrad Industrial Institute, *Trudy*, no. 4, 1939.

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rather the speed with which the opposition was overcome. Its defences, though rationalised in terms of Marxian theory, melted away as the gap between the approach dictated by the changed economic milieu and the traditional one yawned ever wider. (The late Nemchinov's contribution in promoting this process should not go unrecorded.)

The idiosyncratic attitude towards mathematics may still linger in the old school, but it is no longer of any consequence for contemporary thought. The help of mathematics in economic planning theory and practice is fully appreciated, both on the heuristic plane and on the plane of application. No Soviet economist now fears to resort to this help even where it patently compromises time-honoured conceptions. It is noteworthy that the process of reconciliation of thought and life coincided with the increasing practicability of the new ideas due to spectacular advances in computational technology as well as to an extension of frontiers of theoretical knowledge.

IN this expansion certain trends are clearly discernible, a few of which will be mentioned here.

One is the continuous refinement of the new mathematical-economic apparatus, enhancing its usefulness in planning practice. One important direction of inquiry is shown in the attempt to introduce dynamic factors into the balance of the national economy by Konius, Smirnov, Dadayan, Dudkin, and others. Of exceptional importance is the work carried out in recent years by Kantorovich—in part jointly with Makarov—on the efficiency of long-range plan-programming.[23] It should be noted that problems of stage-by-stage optimisation—that is of what is technically labelled dynamic programming—have been for quite a time the area of an important and original Soviet work by the Pontriagin school.

At this point one may at least hint at the research in the field of information and control systems with an eye to the practical possibilities this promises to centralist planning resting on a network of high-powered computer stations. This school of thought looks for help to the theory of 'self-teaching' systems. Soviet theoretical achievement in systems of automatic optimisation is, thanks to Lerner, Feldbaum, and others, very strong indeed, and links up with the work of Pontriagin and his associates.

To put this in a broad frame, what is at present under intensive exploration in Soviet economics is optimal functioning of hierarchical, multi-grade economic systems. Here the mechanism of centralist steering is under theoretical scrutiny.

The investigation of the price structure has an obvious bearing on the practicability and efficiency, or otherwise, of a plan. In other words,

[23] L. V. Kantorovich, V. M. Makarov, 'Optimalnie modeli perspektivnogo planirovaniya', in V. S. Nemchinov, ed., *Primenenie Matematiki v Ekonomicheskikh Issledovanyakh*, vol. 3, 1965.

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it is of crucial significance for the guidance of a centrally planned economy under the regime of profit-maximisation. This has become of immediate practical interest since (again under the pressure of the growing complexity of economic life) ideas of profit-guidance were aired in connection with the reform of the Soviet economic machinery. Probably it is the theoretical clarification of the problem—the enlightenment due to the theory of optimisation—that accounts for the abandoning of the Liberman proposals.

When dynamics came to be tackled in a rigorous fashion the problem of planning for remote horizons was revealed as the crucial one. What is involved is the asymptotic behaviour of key variables, the feasible pace of economic growth, the effect of the choice of the optimality criterion on the construction of rational criteria for the plan-period, with due allowance for at least broadly stated goals beyond-the-horizon. Here, too, it is the Kantorovich school that has posed the decisive problems. Soviet thought has indeed moved full circle. From a broadly postulated equilibrium approach, via its emphatic and total rejection, it has returned to this approach but in a new, far more sophisticated form, revealing new aspects and offering new insights.

The matters now under discussion—in particular as related to optimality criteria—touch upon certain paramount issues of social philosophy. To be sure, once the question of the optimality criteria has been raised as a technical one, the question of substance—that is, of the nature of a socialist society's objectives as well as the optimal means of achieving them—has almost inevitably become the subject of controversy in Soviet economics. Several Soviet students have attempted a technical statement of the objective function. Most recently Kantorovich has come forward with the striking proposition that, together with those elements which can be planned, socialist economics have to take spontaneous forces (*elementy stikhinosti*) into account as well, in particular the behaviour of the consumer and of the seeker of employment. Hence, he argues, workable models have to combine the plan-controls with the use of 'economic indicators' as parameters of control in the area of decentralised decision-making. In fact, among the new fields of economic enquiry, that of consumer's behaviour has been one to which the most intensive theoretical effort has been devoted.

The accent on these ingredients of the economy, on the implications of consumer's choice, is a *novum* with far-reaching social as well as economic implications. Both the change in the environment and changes in the economics of planning indicate a trend from what is usually described as 'resource planning' to 'demand planning', with some consequential change of attitude towards consumer's preferences. As the 'zero-consumption' model of growth ('zero-consumption' in the technical sense) becomes obsolete and is discarded, attention is turned to demand analysis on both the theoretical and the practical level.

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Consequently maximising exclusively the ' objective ' measure of output loses its rationale, and the ' subjective ' aspect comes into the picture. Designing some social welfare function, measuring and weighing utilities, becomes a legitimate concern. Here, too, deeply ingrained thought habits have to be overcome. But Soviet welfare economics is being born—or rather reborn; a link-up with Slutsky of fifty years ago is being established (curiously enough after the Revolution he himself accepted the extinction of his approach under socialism as inexorable!).

Thus, again and again, Soviet economics has had to make readjustments, sometimes drastic. The student of Soviet economics has always been aware of its dogmatist inclinations, and there is little need to stress the tendency to proclaim rigid truths exempt from examination; to discover its ability to shed such dogmas in response to the needs of the time; its flexibility at critical points—and in this sense its pragmatism—thus comes as a certain surprise, not least to the writer of the present lines himself. But then to obtain a balanced view, one apparently needed half a century's perspective.

THE PEASANT

(*continued from p. 107*)

be difficult to create a new agriculture with an aging population (the average age of the active peasant is now 46). Moreover, the modernisation of the countryside is a long-term process requiring a very large amount of capital; decisions will be governed by an economic and international situation which cannot now be foreseen.

In any case, a period of stability and appeasement seems indispensable if the peasants are to grow out of their age-old passivity and bring to the collectivity—as they have always done in the heroic periods of their history—their treasure of vitality, wisdom, realism, and communal feeling, which is a more solid base than any imported ideology for the transformation of Russia.

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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

Morris Ginsberg

THE AIM OF THIS IMPRESSIVE encyclopedia * is to lay the foundations for a comparative study of scientific research in western and communist countries. The articles are designed to disentangle the norms followed by the various disciplines and the assumptions on which they are based, and to examine the social and ideological changes that have occurred, in so far as these are reflected in the work of scientists. The editors must have had great difficulty in selecting the topics which lend themselves to an analysis of this kind. But those they have chosen are clearly of great importance and they have been handled in accordance with high standards of scholarship and a remarkable degree of detachment. They will naturally not always command assent, but even those articles that may not strike the reader as fully impartial provide ample material for further exploration and a valuable bibliographical apparatus covering all sides of the issues involved.

A full review would require a team of specialists. Here all that can be attempted is to offer some reflections on the general strategy of the work and on the value and limitations of the 'confrontation' undertaken. In general, the method followed is to give contributors ample space to develop their themes. The articles, in many cases written by more than one author, are divided into sections dealing separately with communist and non-communist research, followed by a further section devoted to a critical comparison or evaluation of the positions reached. The areas covered, as judged by this first substantial volume, include key topics in political science, anthropology, sociology and social psychology, international relations, comparative religion, archaeology and history, philosophy and biology.

The difficulties of comparison emerge most clearly in the philosophical articles. They arise from the fact that while western philosophical theories are highly diversified and often include deeply opposed views, communist philosophers claim to have achieved a high degree of unity with the aid of the overriding doctrine of dialectical materialism. The reader of the philosophical articles included in this volume will wish to know whether this unity has in fact been achieved. Lenin in his book on *Empirio-Criticism* mentioned sixteen characteristics of dialectical materialism. Some of these related to methods of investigation, such as those defining conditions of objectivity. As a theory of reality they may be briefly summed up in the following way: first, the world must be conceived as a system of interrelated parts; second, in this system there is development; third, phenomena or processes contain within themselves inherent contradictions giving rise to struggle or tension, and development consists in the overcoming of conflicts by radical changes giving rise to ever 'higher'

* **Sowjetsystem und demokratische Gesellschaft. Eine vergleichende Enzyklopaedie.** Band I. 1966. Herder.

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unities. It is claimed that the laws formulating these changes are applicable in the same sense to all spheres of investigation, for example, that the laws of physics, biology, and sociology are all 'dialectical', i.e. deal with contradictions or oppositions and their overcoming in ever higher syntheses. Non-communist philosophers cannot but regard this claim as illusory, based on a highly ambiguous use of the terms 'conflict', 'struggle', 'contradiction'. The term 'contradiction' in fact covers oppositions of very different kinds, contradiction in the strict sense consisting in the assertion of a predicate and its complete negation, contrariety or the assertion of qualities which are mutually incompatible, and a great variety of other ways of asserting differences or otherness or failure to coincide. So, again, the use of terms like 'struggle' or 'conflict' to describe physical processes is highly anthropomorphic and sure to mislead. In brief, the 'unity' is achieved only by lumping together processes of very different kinds under the ambiguous formula of the overcoming of contradictions. In all probability the Marxists are right in rejecting what is sometimes called mechanical materialism, that is, in insisting that the laws governing higher levels cannot be reduced without remainder to laws governing the lower. In this their views resemble non-communist theories of 'emergent evolution'. Both, however, suffer from the same weakness: they offer no satisfactory explanation of the emergence of novelty or the transition from one level to another.

Many of these points are made in the articles devoted to *Dialektik*. The author of the very lucid article on Dialectical Materialism lays particular stress on the ambiguities inherent in the use of the term 'contradiction'. The struggle of forces in the physical world is not a case of contradiction, but of a clash between positive forces, and on Marxist-Leninist theory should be causally determined. In fact, however, no explanation is given in causal terms of the emergence of anything qualitatively new, e.g. of the living from the non-living or the conscious from the unconscious. Furthermore, the dialectical theory fails to show why development must always have its source in a struggle of opposites and cannot result from a harmonious cooperation of different causes. The author seems to think that the Hegelian view escapes these difficulties, but in this his argument fails to carry conviction.

Reference may also be made in this context to the interesting article on Determinism and Indeterminism. Communist views of the problems involved, though asserted with greater confidence, show no great advances on those given by non-communists, and in the end leave the fundamental issues unresolved. This applies especially to the attitude adopted towards the relations between determinism and the freedom of the will. Lenin dismissed freedom as a 'nonsensical fable'. Nevertheless, he followed Engels and others in admitting freedom in the sense of the 'recognition of necessity'. Social changes, it is held, like other changes, are determined in accordance with universal laws. These, however, operate within varying conditions. Since the latter are not predictable in detail, the individual, it is conceded, has a certain measure of freedom. The relation between the laws of social development, supposing them to be established, and the part played by conscious choice raises problems which Marxist-Leninist writings do not succeed in clarifying.

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AS EXAMPLES OF THE WAY in which key topics in sociology and political science are handled, I choose for brief comment those devoted to authority and democracy. Authority is defined as the right or the power to direct, guide, or command. The field within which it is exercised is very wide, including relations between parents and children, teacher and pupil, master and slave, employer and employed. In this article the discussion is restricted to the political sphere. Even so, wide-ranging problems have to be dealt with—the relations between might and right, freedom and order, the grounds of obedience to law, questions of legitimation and definitions of competence. On all these matters widely different views have been held by western thinkers. Comparison with communist theories is thus no easy task.

Two kinds of inquiry are discussed in the article, factual and ethical. The first concerns the psychological and social factors affecting the relationship of command-obedience, e.g. the degree of their dependence on force or consent, tacit or explicit, the conditions of submissiveness, indifference, or revolt. A brief account is given of empirical research undertaken in this field by western investigators. In Soviet Russia, it seems, such research is not encouraged. The greater part of the article is devoted to the ethical problems of what constitutes rightful authority. The difficulties inherent in the doctrines which seek to justify the acceptance by the individual of commands, as in some sense self-imposed, are dealt with rather too briefly. Even Hobbes recoiled from the inference that a citizen was obeying himself when his sovereign ordered him to be hanged. The doctrine of the general will, claiming that in obeying the commands of the state a citizen is obeying his 'real' as distinguished from his 'actual' will, is open to similar objections. It is small comfort to the ordinary worker to be told that the party leaders, as representing the general will, are alone capable of defining his 'true' interests, in other words, that he 'really' wants what his leaders say he ought to want. The utilitarian theories of the basis of governmental authority deserve fuller discussion than they are here given. They look on government as a device to be judged by its efficiency in the attainment of the ends desired. Particular investigation is on this view required to determine what degree of compulsion or other forms of control is required to attain these ends. Control from above may be unavoidable in some spheres, while other matters are best left to individual choice.

Marxist theories are considered in this article as on the whole in the earlier period anti-authoritarian. All forms of authority, familial, religious, or economic, it is held, aim at domination or exploitation and are therefore 'unjust'. The state does not serve the interests of society but of a dominant class. In a just society the state would wither away and give place, not indeed to anarchy, but to an administrative apparatus based on functional division of labour and a rational coordination of activities. In later phases authoritarianism gained ground steadily. Lip service continued to be paid to the doctrine of the withering away of the state and the abolition of the power of man over man. In practice, however, the needs of defending the revolution against its enemies were held to involve an organisation able and entitled to command unconditional obedience. In addition,

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this was supported theoretically on the ground that the success of the revolution depended on a 'true understanding' of the interests of the proletariat, and that this could not be achieved by the mass of workers without the aid of a tightly knit group of revolutionary Marxists. Since this form of the doctrine of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was used by Lenin in his definition of the state, the claims of the latter to unswerving loyalty and obedience could not but be strengthened. These matters are dealt with at some length in the article. Finally, an account is given of the development of theory and practice in communist countries other than Soviet Russia. These show considerable diversity, so that in the author's view it is no longer meaningful to speak of *the* communist theory of authority.

WHAT EMERGES FROM ALL THIS? The summary evaluation given in the final section is somewhat disappointing. Indeed, the author can find no principles of appraisal: 'Whoever considers a given system of authority just and valid will find something to blame in all others. A relativist will believe that all or at least some authority systems are partly just, partly unjust. Finally, those who are indifferent will probably adjust themselves to whatever system is imposed on them'. Is this really all that can be said? Would it not have been in accord with the aim of the Encyclopedia to inquire into the presuppositions of the different views, and in particular to determine to what extent the divergencies are rooted in differences of ethical outlook or arise from different interpretations of the facts involved?

As a further example of the procedure followed in this Encyclopedia I propose to comment briefly on the article devoted to Democracy. How ambiguous this term is can be seen in the fact that virtually all regimes nowadays claim to be democracies and that democratic parties find it necessary to add qualifying words, such as social, liberal, Christian. The question thus arises whether there are any fundamental elements in the notion of democracy upon which there is general agreement and in what ways these are related to the more variable elements. In this article stress is laid on the ideas of popular sovereignty and equality, but with these are linked many others, such as constitutionalism and the separation of powers, the rule of law, guaranteed basic rights, majority rule, and in recent times, social and economic equality. The author gives a very full historical and comparative analysis of all these notions and of their relations to each other, making very effective use of both communist and non-communist sources.

In the author's view the divergent views about democracy arise not so much from different interpretations of the notion of democracy as of the principles which have come to be associated with it. Thus neither the multi-party system nor group pluralism can be logically deduced from the notion of democracy. Conceivably, a single-party system need not necessarily be undemocratic, if there is sufficient freedom of opinion within the party. If, however, the formation of 'fractions' within the party is prohibited, as it is in most communist countries, the claim to inner democracy is nothing but an empty phrase. Perhaps the fundamental difference between communist and non-communist views of democracy is to be found in the attitudes adopted to social equality and its relation to political equality, and thus to

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the measures to be taken for assuring social equality. Marxists lay stress on the importance of abolishing class distinctions and on homogeneity of outlook. The idea of a pluralist society is therefore not acceptable to them. Western socialists and indeed others who favour the welfare state believe in the use of political measures to assure social equality and in the democratisation of the economic system. But they insist that in complex societies the problem of equality cannot be properly understood in terms of a class struggle, and that to use force in assuring equality is to risk the loss of the hard-won liberties of the struggle for democracy. In the West the movement towards equality has involved a shift in the balance of political power and economic power, in other words, a change in the patterns of relationship between representative institutions and the economic associations of employers and employed. In the communist areas a different route has been followed. Despite growing convergence due to the impact of the new industrial revolution which is producing economic structures broadly similar in all highly industralised societies, irrespective of the type of political system, there remain fundamental differences which it would be a great mistake to under-estimate.

The influence of ideological factors on the work of Soviet scientists as reflected in the articles included in this first volume of the Encyclopedia varies considerably from case to case. It seems to be strong in such disciplines as comparative religion, as is evident from the articles on Christianity, Buddhism, or biblical criticism. It is not so marked in the article on demography, though the author shows that Soviet demographers have so far shown little readiness to revise Marxist population theories in the light of the available statistical information. The situation in sciences outside the social field will no doubt be further clarified in the volumes yet to be published. To judge from the article on biology in the volume before us, significant changes have taken place. The author distinguishes three phases. In the first biology as generally taught was encouraged in the hope that it would lead to improvements in agriculture. Disappointed with the results, the party leaders gave increasing support to the Lysenko school. Since 1964 a more independent attitude and a growing respect for international standards have been gaining ground.

The publisher expresses regrets that for various reasons Soviet scientists have not felt able to contribute articles. Whether this abstention has resulted in any unfairness to the Soviet point of view I am not in a position to judge. In any event the publisher deserves to be warmly praised for undertaking this difficult experiment in mutual understanding. The scale of the enterprise evokes admiration. It is hoped that the publication of the four subsequent volumes will not be long delayed.

MOSCOW AND DELHI

Violet Conolly

This is a most exhaustive case study of the ramifications and organisation of Soviet propaganda in India.* It is prefaced by a general

* Peter Sager, **Moscow's Hand in India.** Swiss Eastern Institute, Berne, 1966, pp. 224.

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survey and history of Tass, ' the biggest publicity agency in the world ', including details of its younger sister Novosti. While much of this information about Tass will be familiar to students of Soviet affairs, the details of the vast Soviet propaganda machine in India have not hitherto been assembled so fully or analysed so incisively.

The headquarters of this propaganda is the Information Department of the Soviet Embassy, which is supplemented by representatives of Tass, the Soviet press (*Pravda, Izvestiya*), and the Soviet radio and TV. The activities of this Information Department are manifold. It floods the Indian press with slanted information hand-outs, Soviet features and other press releases, publishes a bi-monthly illustrated magazine, *Soviet Land,* in 13 Indian languages, apart from the English edition. The object is ' the promotion of an image of the Soviet Union . . . seen exclusively through rose-coloured lenses; all deficiencies are disguised, every breath of criticism kept well away from the reader '.

India is very vulnerable to this sort of approach owing to the general ignorance of conditions in the Soviet Union and the lack of specialist sources of accurate information. Round-table discussions are also organised (often in various Indian languages) under the auspices of *Soviet Land* in connection with visits to India of high-ranking Soviet personalities. The Information Department does not overlook the importance of winning the sympathy of Indian youth. Two journals cater specially for young people: *Youth Review* (in English and Hindi, for the 16–32 years age group), and *Sputnik Junior* (for 8–16-year-olds).

This massive propaganda machine is underpinned by many front organisations, such as the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, the All-India Peace Council, the Indian Association for Afro-Asian Solidarity; ' Fellow Travellers in High Places ' (p. 178) like the ex-Defence Minister Krishna Menon; and a wide range of methods used by the Information Department to influence public opinion through the press and individual journalists from ' payment in kind ' like cocktails and holidays in the Soviet Union, to direct financial payments (pp. 91–103) for reproducing Soviet material.

While this illuminating study leaves no doubt that a good deal of shady business transpires under the aegis of the Information Department, it provides no clear-cut answer about the success of this dynamic propaganda effort. It is disappointing to be left up in the air.

PLANNING THE ECONOMY

Philip Hanson

THE PRESENT REVIEWER is shamefully ignorant of much of the excellent work on the Soviet economy that has been published in France, and suspects that the same is true of many of his colleagues. Perhaps induced chauvinism is an occupational hazard for Anglo-Saxons who read the Soviet press. At all events, French writings on the Soviet economy do not always receive the attention in Britain and America that they deserve. In the case of this original and perceptive book by Philippe Bernard, a translation is particularly welcome.*

* Philippe J. Bernard, **Planning in the Soviet Union,** translated by I. Nove, Oxford, 1966, xxv and 309 pp. 60s.

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The author's professional background is in planning rather than Sovietology. He made a longish visit to the USSR in 1961, and interviewed a number of senior planners and economists. It is apparent that he has also studied a wide range of Soviet and other writings on the planning system. The result is a book with an unusual insight into practical planning problems, which is at the same time well informed about Soviet institutions and methods.

The subject is the planning system, not the economy in general. The organisational set-up and procedures in the early 1960s are described clearly and in detail. The original purpose of Dr Bernard's visit was to study Soviet regional policy, and there is an interesting chapter on this, with a discussion of the location criteria actually used at both all-Union and regional levels. The account of problems and methods of Soviet planning is the central part of the book; it is preceded by an account of the social and ideological background, and followed by a discussion of the familiar staple topics of most western writing on the Soviet economy: static efficiency and growth performance.

The treatment is commonsense and non-technical. Either in spite of this or because of it, there are many striking insights. The early background chapters contain many persuasive general observations. Bernard stresses that the USSR 'does not convey the impression of a modern country', and in finding a lack of 'modernity' in people as well as in things he surely goes to the root of many Russian social phenomena. He lists a number of fundamental questions about economic policy which 'do not seem to occur to Soviet minds'. 'Why', he asks, 'the insistence on catching up with the United States, the very model of super-capitalism which cannot by definition be regarded as ideal?' Later, he suggests an answer: that the broad aims and values of Soviet society are similar to those of western societies, and 'communist ideology is original only in its opposition to capitalist economies and capitalist society, which it denounces as being the sole obstacle to achieving those general aims'.

The account of planning procedures refers primarily to the situation in 1961. However, the 1962–63 and 1964–65 reforms are also discussed. There is an excellent description of the content and time-sequence of short and long-term planning decisions. Bernard concludes that in the early 1960s 'plan preparation at enterprise level [was] by no means a mere formality', but also that at the USSR Gosplan level changes of 10 to 20 per cent in the initial proposals from enterprises were not unusual.

The author makes a great deal of sense of some problems that bulk large in Soviet controversy and reform but are poorly understood by most western commentators. One example is the problem of inadequate plant specialisation which, he points out, is particularly acute in consumer-durables production and in 'local' industry and has been restricted by the territorial divisions used in planning and administration.

In general, Dr Bernard is less inclined than many writers to throw up his hands in pious dismay at the instances of micro-economic disorder. After a critical account of the Soviet industrial supply system, he points out that, for all its faults, the system works 'in a more or less orderly fashion', and that the Soviet industrial machine does not appear to have suffered in the post-war period any breakdown in supplies as crippling as the British fuel crisis of 1947.

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The chapter on resource allocation and growth, which follows the more earthy discussion of the planning system, is often penetrating but also somewhat discursive. Dr Bernard suggests that a system in which enterprises finance most of their own investment is inherently more unstable than one in which most of the finance comes from the state budget, but the argument is not clearly spelt out.

The translation is clear and reads well. Obviously it was made from a French edition updated to mid-1965 and not, as the title-page unfortunately implies, from the original text published in 1963.

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DOCUMENTS:

The thrice-postponed fourth congress of Soviet writers was finally held in Moscow in May 1967. It was so organised as to preserve the facade of unanimity, and the literary celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the revolution was not marred by any dissenting voices from the platform. But although its proceedings were dominated by such diehards as Markov, Sobolev, Gribachev, Novichenko, and Sholokhov, dissent hovered in the background. Sholokhov attacked Ehrenburg and the younger writers (like Evtushenko and Voznesensky) for their absence from the congress, and the ghosts of Sinyavsky, Daniel, and Solzhenitsyn must have been stalking the corridors (only one guest, M. Lanoux, made an indirect reference to the two imprisoned writers).

We reproduce below the text of an Open Letter *addressed to the congress by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and extracts from an interview with him which appeared in the Slovak journal,* Kulturni Zhivot, *31 March 1967.*

An Open Letter to the Fourth Congress of Soviet Writers from Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Since I am unable to speak from the platform, I would ask the congress to consider the following questions:

(1) The oppression, insupportable in the long run, to which our literature has for decades and decades been subjected, on the part of the censorship, and which the Writers' Union can no longer tolerate.

The censorship, for which there is no provision in the Constitution and which is therefore illegal, the censorship which never passes under its own name, has imposed its yoke on literature under the obscure name of 'Glavlit'. It gives to literary illiterates the possibility of taking arbitrary measures against writers. The censorship, this survival of the Middle Ages, has managed, like a kind of Methusaleh, to live almost into the twenty-first century. In its refuge, it tries to assume the attributes of timelessness and to sort out the good books from the bad.

There is no suggestion, and no recognition of the right of our writers to state publicly their opinions about the moral life of men and of society, to elucidate in their own way the social problems or the historical experiences which have so profoundly affected our country. Works which could have expressed the thoughts matured among the people, which might in time have exercised a valuable influence in the spiritual domain or on the evolution of the social conscience, are prohibited or distorted by the censorship as a result of calculations which, from the point of view of the people, are pettifogging, egotistic, and short-sighted.

Excellent manuscripts by young authors, still completely unknown, are today rejected by editors on the sole ground that they 'will not pass' the censor. Many members of the Union, and even delegates to this

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congress, know how they themselves have had to bow to the pressures of the censorship, to capitulate on matters concerning the structure and orientation of their works. They have rewritten chapters, pages, paragraphs, phrases; they have sweetened them only because they wanted to have them published; and in so doing they have damaged them irreparably. If we bear in mind the special character of literary works, it is obvious that these mutilations are pernicious for works of talent, but quite imperceptible in others. What is best in our literature is mutilated when it appears.

At the same time the labels used by the censorship ('ideologically pernicious', 'incorrect') are very ephemeral. They are changed and discarded before our eyes. Even Dostoevsky, the pride of world literature, could not at one time be published in our country (even today he is not published in full). He was excluded from educational curricula, he was made inaccessible to the reader, he was slandered. For how many years was Esenin considered a 'counter-revolutionary' (and were not people imprisoned for possessing his books)? Was not Mayakovsky branded an 'anarchist', a 'political hooligan'? For decades the immortal poems of Akhmatova were considered to be 'anti-Soviet'. The first modest publication of the dazzling poetry of Tsvetaeva, which appeared about ten years ago, was declared a 'crude political error'. It was only after a delay of twenty or thirty years that we have been given the works of Bunin, Bulgakov, Platonov, Mandelshtam, Voloshin, Gumilev, Klyuev. 'Recognition' of Zamyatin and Remizov could not be avoided. This is the decisive moment: after the death of an inconvenient writer, he is sooner or later given back to us 'with the explanation of his errors'. For a long time Pasternak's name could not be spoken aloud. Now he is dead: now his books are published and his poems are even quoted on ceremonial occasions.

Truly they bear witness to the truth of Pushkin's words: '*they are capable of loving only the dead*'.

But the late publication or the 'acceptance' of a name does not compensate at all for the social and artistic losses suffered by our people because of these monstrous delays, this stifling of the artistic conscience (in particular, there were the writers of the twenties, Pilnyak, Platonov, Mandelshtam, who at a very early stage denounced the birth of the personality cult and the characteristic traits of Stalin, but they were annihilated, they were stifled, instead of being listened to). Literature cannot develop between the categories 'permitted' and 'not permitted', you can write about this, you can't write about that'. Literature which does not breathe the same air as contemporary society, which cannot communicate to it its pains and fears, which cannot give warning in time against moral and social dangers, does not deserve the name of literature. It deserves only the name of literary make-up. Such a literature loses the confidence of its people. Its books do not deserve to be read. They are nothing but printed paper.

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Our literature has lost the leading position which it occupied in the world at the end of the last century and the beginning of this; it has also lost the passion for experimentation which distinguished it during the twenties. The literature of our country appears today to all the world as infinitely poorer, more flat and worthless than it is in reality, than it would look if it were not being restricted, if it were not being prevented from developing. The loser is our country, as it is being judged by world opinion, and world literature is also the loser. If it had before it all the fruits of our literature, without restrictions, if it could gain a deeper insight as a result of our spiritual experience, the artistic evolution of the entire world would be different; it could find a new vigour and reach a new artistic level.

I propose that the congress should demand and obtain the abolition of all censorship—open or concealed—of artistic works, that it should free the publishing houses of their obligation to obtain permission from the authorities before publishing any work.

(2) The obligations of the Union to its members. These obligations are not clearly formulated in its statutes ('protection of rights of authorship' and 'measures to protect the other rights of authors'). It is painful to have to state that for a third of a century the Union has not protected either these 'other rights' or even the authorship rights of writers.

In their lifetime many writers have been exposed, in the press and from the platform, to insults and slander without having any opportunity of replying. More, they have been exposed to violence and physical persecution (Bulgakov, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Platonov, Alexander Grin, Vasily Grossman). Not only did the Union of Writers not offer them the columns of its journals for them to reply and defend themselves; not only did it not intervene on their behalf; the board of the Union always placed itself at the head of the persecutors. Those who are an ornament of our twentieth-century poetry have been excluded from the Union, assuming they were ever admitted. More still: the board of the Union in cowardly fashion abandoned to their misfortune those whom persecution finally condemned to exile, to the concentration camp, to death (Paul Vasiliev, Mandelshtam, Artem Vesely, Pilnyak, Babel, Tabidze, Zabolotsky and others). We have had to break off the list with 'and others'. After the twentieth party congress we learned that there were more than six hundred writers who were guilty of no crime and whom the Union obediently left to their fate in the prisons and the camps. But the list is still longer. Our eyes have not seen, and never will see, the end of the list, for it will never be fully unrolled. It contains the names of young writers and poets of whom we learnt only by chance, thanks to personal meetings, men whose talent withered in the camps before coming to flower, men whose writings have not been rescued from the offices of the security services since the days of Yagoda, Ezhov, Beria, Abakumov.

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There is no reason in history for the board of the Union now elected to share with its predecessors responsibility for the past.

I propose that paragraph 22M of the statutes of the Union should formulate clearly all the guarantees of protection that the Union affords to those of its members who are exposed to slander and to unjustified persecution, in such a way as to make a repetition of the illegalities of the past impossible.

If the congress does not remain indifferent to what I have said, I ask it to pay attention to the prohibitions and persecutions to which I have myself been subjected:

(i) My novel *The first circle* was taken from me nearly two years ago by the State Security Service, which has prevented me from submitting it to publishers. On the other hand, against my will and even without my being informed, this novel has been ' published ' in a ' closed ' edition, to be read by a selected but unnamed few. My novel has been made accessible to literary officials, but it has been concealed from the majority of writers. I am unable to get it openly discussed in the writers' sections of the Union, and I cannot prevent its being misused or plagiarised.

(ii) At the same time as the novel, my literary archives, collected over fifteen or twenty years, papers which were not intended for publication, were confiscated. Now tendentious extracts from these archives are being distributed in ' closed editions ' among the same selected circle. Some verses called ' The Banquet of the Victors ', which I wrote and learned by heart in the camp, and in which I appear under four different numbers (when we were abandoned to death, forgotten by society, and outside the camp nobody rose to our defence), these verses which I have long left far behind me, are now being described as my most recent piece of writing.

(iii) For the last three years an irresponsible campaign of slander has been waged against me, who spent the entire war as commander of a battery and received military decorations. It is now being said that I passed the war years as a common prisoner, or that I surrendered to the enemy (I was never a prisoner of war), that I ' betrayed my country ', ' served the Germans '. That is how they explain the eleven years which I spent in the camps and in exile, where I was sent for having criticised Stalin. This slander has been spread at meetings and at closed sessions by persons holding official positions. I have tried, but in vain, to stop the slander by appealing to the Russian Writers' Union and to the press. I did not even get an answer from the Union, and no paper published my reply to the slanderers. On the contrary! Last year, the slander spread against me was reinforced, became sharper; they are using a distorted version of materials taken from my confiscated archives, and I am deprived of any possibility of replying.

(iv) My story, *The Cancer Ward* (25 folios), which was recommended for publication (first part) by the prose-writers' section of the

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Moscow writers' organisation, cannot be published either in separate parts (five periodicals have rejected it), nor as a whole (rejected by *Novy Mir*, *Zvezda*, and *Prostor*).

(v) The Sovremennik Theatre, which accepted my play called 'The Stag and the Camp Prostitute' in 1962, has still not been given permission to present it.

(vi) The scenario of the film 'The tanks know the truth', the play 'The light within you', some short stories ('The true touch', and some other short pieces) have found neither a publisher nor producer.

(vii) Those of my stories which have been published in *Novy Mir* have never appeared in book form. Everybody has refused (Soviet Writers Publishing House, State Literary Publishing House, the Ogonek Library). They remain, therefore, inaccessible to the public at large.

(viii) At the same time I have been forbidden to make any other contacts with my readers, including public readings of my works (in November 1966 nine sessions out of eleven arranged were at the last moment cancelled), and radio broadcasts. Even the simple act of giving a manuscript for 'reading and copying' is now something criminal in our country (the old Russian scribes could do it without hindrance five centuries ago).

In this way my work has been strangled, it has been slain and damned.

Will the fourth congress of the Writers' Union take it upon itself to defend me against such a scurrilous attack on my rights as an author and my 'other' rights? Yes or no? It seems to me that the choice to be made is not without importance for the literary future of many congress delegates.

I have a clear conscience, because I have fulfilled my duties as a writer in all circumstances and because I will fulfil them even more successfully, more indisputably, when I am dead than I can while I am still alive. Nobody can bar the road to the truth. I am ready to accept death for the sake of the movement. But how many lessons do we need to teach us that the writer's pen should not be stopped while he still lives? Never once in our history have we been able to say this is so.

One Day With Solzhenitsyn — An Interview

Our readers have already had an opportunity to read some of Solzhenitsyn's works (*Matryona's Home*, *An Incident at Krechetovka Station*, *For the Good of the Cause*, etc.), and in particular *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, which was more than the spontaneous outcry of the artist's tormented soul, the label it was given when it achieved worldwide fame. Solzhenitsyn is, in fact, a writer by vocation, as I realised when I visited this 50-year-old man, who used to teach mathematics and physics somewhere in the Soviet Union, in his Ryazan home. His whole life was a conscious preparation for creative writing. Not only self-discipline but his own experiences helped him to become a writer.

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Solzhenitsyn was born in Kislovodsk in 1918 and his childhood and school years were spent in Rostov-on-Don, in Southern Russia. He studied mathematics and physics at the University of Moscow, and history, philosophy, and literature at an excellent institute in Moscow. A few days before the outbreak of the Second World War he graduated with two degrees.

Solzhenitsyn: I was not sure what to do next. I was good at mathematics and it was suggested that I should do postgraduate research. I never intended to devote the rest of my life to mathematics. Literature was the greatest attraction but I realised that mathematics would at least provide me with my bread and butter.

His first writings, sent to Lavrenev and Fedin, were not accepted. Some have been preserved but others are still in Lubyanka prison.

Solzhenitsyn almost became an actor. According to Zawadski, a stage director who founded a drama school when deported to Rostov, Solzhenitsyn had talent but had to give up the idea of acting when it was discovered that he suffered from chronic laryngitis.

After the outbreak of war Solzhenitsyn was still convinced that his future lay in literature. . . . In the army they did not know what to do with him. Although a mathematician and foot soldier, Solzhenitsyn was attached to a unit using horse-drawn transport. Together with some old and ill Cossacks, he was expected to look after almost ninety horses although he had no idea how they should be handled. He dreamed of the artillery. The military situation at the beginning of 1942 was so critical, however, that nobody had time to show any interest in Solzhenitsyn and his requests for transfer to an artillery unit were unsuccessful. But at last, with the help of an officer in his unit, who had been at the front, the transfer came through. . . . He finished a training course for junior officers and was afterwards sent on a fortnight's journey to the Gorki region.

Solzhenitsyn: All I saw and experienced there is reflected in *An Incident at Krechetovka Station.*

He managed to get to the front as a result of a mathematical question he asked the commander of the officers' school. The question was designed to ridicule the commander, but the latter was so impressed that he appointed Solzhenitsyn chief of a radio reconnaissance battery. He was promoted to the rank of captain and took part in the battles of Leningrad and Kursk, and then marched from Orel through White Russia and Poland to Berlin.

In January 1945, during the battle for Königsberg, he was summoned by the commander of the division, Major-General Travkin (later to become his close friend) who ordered Solzhenitsyn to hand over his revolver. The General was obviously ill at ease and Solzhenitsyn was unable to understand the reason behind the order. He handed over his revolver and was then stripped of his badge of rank and decorations by two officers. His only memory of that moment is of the noise made

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by the artillery moving away from the nearby front line. Before Solzhenitsyn was taken away General Travkin managed to shake his hand.

Solzhenitsyn: That handshake was one of the most heroic acts I had seen during the whole course of the war. I was arrested because of my naive and childish ideas. I knew that it was forbidden to write of military matters in letters from the front, but I thought it was permitted to think and reflect on events. For a long time I had been sending a friend letters clearly criticising Stalin though without mentioning his name. I thought he had betrayed Leninism and was responsible for the defeats of the first phase of the war, that he was a weak theoretician and that his language was primitive. In my youthful recklessness I put all these thoughts down on paper.

I was held in Lubyanka prison in Moscow. After interrogation, and without trial, I was sentenced by special decision to eight years' imprisonment. I never thought this unjust. After all, I had expressed inadmissible opinions.

I would never have survived the camp had it not been for mathematics. I was unfit for manual work and could not make moral compromises. I was employed on building sites near Moscow and in Moscow itself. On Leninskii Prospekt there is a large building with turrets and a shop called Spartak on the ground floor. I worked there. In a questionnaire we had to fill in, I wrote that I was a mathematician and physicist. I was then taken to a prison research institute where the standard was so high that any scientist would have been proud to work there. As a prisoner mathematician I spent four of the eight years in good conditions.

For the last three years of my sentence I was in a mining region in Kazakhstan. It was there I conceived the idea of writing *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.* Since it was a special camp we all had numbers stamped on the forehead, heart, knees, and back. My number was *Shch.* 232. (A day later I went with Solzhenitsyn to the elegant Lira café for young people in Moscow. We left our coats in the cloakroom and the attendant gave us tickets. Solzhenitsyn glanced at his cloakroom ticket and smiled: 'It seems that I shall never get rid of this number'. It was 232.)

Solzhenitsyn: It took me two years in the camp to learn the trade of stone-cutting and iron-casting. I was released in February 1953, a month after the end of my sentence. On March 5 1953 I walked the streets of a town, a free but deported man. An old deaf woman woke me up one morning and forced me to go out and listen to a communiqué broadcast by the local radio station. Stalin's death was announced. It was my first day of freedom.

Later on I was summoned to appear before the local committee of the security police, where I was asked to sign a document confirming

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my permanent deportation. It was formulated exactly in this way—permanent deportation, not deportation for life. I refused to sign.

In 1956 I was living as a deportee on the edge of a desert to the south-west of Balkhash, in the village of Kok-Teren (Green Poplar). As a free man it would have been more difficult to find employment. I was in the fortunate position of being the only mathematician in the village and was easily able to find a teaching post. *Matryona's Home* had its origin there. The events in that story took place in 1956, and not 1953 as was stated in the first edition.

While still in the camp Solzhenitsyn had an operation. The doctors correctly diagnosed a tumour, but he was not allowed to know the truth. His sufferings in 1953 were so severe that he frequently lost self-control, but there was nobody in the village able to give him treatment.

Solzhenitsyn: I was dying. But later I managed to reach Tashkent and after long treatment I recovered. The tumour does not bother me now.

Throughout his imprisonment Alexander Solzhenitsyn immersed himself in the Russian language and of course wrote poems, prose, and plays. *The Stag and the Camp Prostitute* was written in 1954. Later he wrote the novel *The First Circle*, but it was not well received.

The Stalinist personality cult was the source of all the accusations levelled against Solzhenitsyn and was the reason for his arrest. It was only after the twentieth party congress that he was allowed to return to normal life. His old dream of living in Central Russia could now be realised.

Solzhenitsyn: I know that the easiest thing for a writer is to write about himself. But I have always felt that to write about the fate of Russia was the most fascinating and important task to be performed. The fate of Ivan Denisovich was the greatest tragedy in all Russian drama. I also wanted to expose the false image of prison camps. While still in the camp I made up my mind to describe one day of prison life. Tolstoy once said that a novel can deal with either centuries of European history or a day in one man's life. . . .

In addition to works already published, Solzhenitsyn has also written a novel called *The Cancer Ward*, running to many hundred pages (a fragment of this novel was published by *Pravda* in Bratislava). The second part was finished during my visit to Ryazan. Solzhenitsyn considered *The Stag and the Camp Prostitute* to be the best of his earlier works. He used a verse from the Gospel of Saint Luke for another play: 'See to it then that the light within you is not darkness' (11:35).

Solzhenitsyn: I wanted to write a play that had nothing to do with politics or the larger national problems. The action takes place in an unknown country, the time is not precisely defined, and all the characters are given international names. My purpose was not to camouflage. I was interested in the moral problems of highly civilised societies, whether capitalist or socialist.

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After Solzhenitsyn's rehabilitation in 1957, the first to read or rather to listen to *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* were members of the Supreme Military Court. He read his novel to the first judges he had ever seen. After its publication in book form, Solzhenitsyn sent several short stories to *Novy Mir*, and *The Stag and the Camp Prostitute* to the Sovremennik Theatre. It took about nine years to write *The First Circle*; it is about seven hundred pages long, and was finished two days after Stalin's death. The action of the novel is confined to one day and part of the night in December 1949. The characters are Stalin, a watchman, representatives of the intelligentsia, and government officials. Part of the action takes place in a scientific institute for *zaks* (prison slang derived from the Russian word *zakliuchenny*—prisoner).

After a brief silence Solzhenitsyn returned to the subject of his play, which is concerned with the moral problems existing in highly civilised societies.

Solzhenitsyn: I do not think it is a good play, although both the Vakhtangov Theatre and the Komsomol Theatre wanted to produce it some time ago.

It was written in 1960 but never published. He also wrote sixteen micro-stories, not more than 15 to 20 lines each. Like many of his other writings, they were first composed and memorised, and only put down on paper after a lapse of several years. These short stories were popular throughout the area where Solzhenitsyn was living at the time. They were published without his knowledge by *Encounter* (March 1965). Literary critics in England identified the author by an analysis of the language. In 1959 he was looking for a new medium of expression and was working on a scenario for a film, but he 'has still not decided to show his latest works to his readers'.

Solzhenitsyn: By intuition, and by his singular vision of the world, a writer is able to discover far earlier than other people various aspects of social life and can often see them from an unexpected angle. This is the essence of talent. Talent, however, imposes certain duties. It is incumbent upon a writer to inform society of all that he is able to perceive and especially all that is unhealthy and a cause for anxiety. I was brought up with Russian literature and only circumstances prevented me from pursuing more extensive studies. . . . Russian literature has always been sensitive to human suffering. We sometimes hear that literature should beautify the future. This is falsification, and justifies lying. Such literature is a kind of make-up. . . . In literature cosmetics are very harmful.

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NAUM MIKHAILOVICH JASNY 1883–1967

Naum Jasny, who died at the age of 84 on 22 April 1967, occupied a very special place in the study of the USSR. He was a Russian emigré in the United States, working on American and general agricultural economics, when distress at the superficial understanding of the Soviet economy displayed there during the war decided him to turn to this subject. Between 1945 and his death he produced a dozen books and nearly eighty articles on Soviet agriculture, industry, statistics, prices, planning, and labour. Most of this work was done before the immense improvement in the quantity and honesty of Soviet statistical and other information, which has confirmed his conclusions to a remarkable extent. The first book, written in the darkest days of Soviet informational black-out and propaganda, *The Socialised Agriculture of the USSR: Plans and Performance* (1949), is still the outstanding work on the subject. (Its accuracy in the light of subsequent data is discussed by Alec Nove, 'Jasny's "Agriculture" Revisited', in *Soviet Studies*, October 1960.) The other main books are *Soviet Industrialization 1928–52* (1961), and three shorter works on prices published in 1951–2. A little-known but characteristic work by Jasny is *Errors and Omissions in Jasny's Monographs on the Soviet Economy* (Stanford, 1952). A survey of the points on which he broke new ground would require a treatise.

Jasny's strength was his awareness of the possible in the economy of his native country, and his use of methods suited to the peculiarities of the data. During the early and middle 1950s he was involved in bitter controversy with those who used more refined and slower procedures in American academic work, which outraged his sense of realism and of urgency. The subject soon matured sufficiently to accommodate both the academic and the Jasny schools, but in the meantime he made extensive use of publishing outlets in Europe. He contributed many articles to this periodical.

Jasny, working alone (he said that his only assistant was his pencil), made a one-man contribution which may well be unique in the realistic analysis of the economy of any country. More important, perhaps, is the possibility that his work may one day play a significant part in the process, now begun, of assessing the Soviet experience inside the USSR.

Jasny's outstanding characteristic was courage—which was apparent in many disputes with editors and publishers. He was incapable of any kind of superficiality or, despite the maze of figures which much of his work involved, of dullness. Some people, he once said, write in such a way that flies fall dead from the wall. He loved the company of small

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children, perhaps for the simplicity and directness which he had in common with them.

Amongst Jasny's MSS are a full-scale study of the Menshevik and neo-Narodnik economists of the 1920s and his memoirs. The latter is an intellectual autobiography. He was persuaded with difficulty to include something on his personal history, which he put in an addendum. His earlier careers were, first, as an advocate who never received a fee, and then managing partner in a flour mill which he left because the war made profits too high. He served until the Bolshevik revolution on wartime voluntary organisations for food supply. After unpaid journalism in post-war Vienna he worked in Germany on the world grain market, in which he acquired an international reputation, and from 1933 on agricultural economics in the United States. During the second world war he studied the food grains of classical antiquity, becoming the leading authority in this field and reluctantly abandoning it for the Soviet economy.

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